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THE

VETERANS

OF

CHELSEA HOSPITAL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"THE SUBALTERN," TRADITIONS OF CHELSEA COLLEGE,"
"COUNTRY CURATE," ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1844.

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THE VETERANS

OF

CHELSEA HOSPITAL.

HARGROVE'S STORY.

CHAPTER V.

MY CIRCUMSTANCES DO NOT IMPROVE.

The day had fully dawned when I lay down; and my slumbers were, as may be imagined, both feverish and unrefreshing. I went through again, in my dreams, all the horrors which had been enacted while I was awake; and saw strange phantoms which, somehow or another, appeared to be connected with them. I fancied that from the sharper's room I had escaped to the Bungalow, on the Hoogley, and sought my mother from one apartment to another till I found her. She was very pale, and her raven hair hung in confused masses over her shoulders; while across them a bandage seemed to have been drawn, of the cause of which I was not ignorant. I knew, in fact, that she was dead; yet I spoke to her as if she had been a living woman.

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What shall I say? She told me, more in sorrow than in anger, that my career would end fatally. She entreated me to have pity, not so much upon myself as upon her; and wrung her hands with a gesture so piteous, that to this hour I have never forgotten it. I started from my pillow, awoke with a cold sweat upon my brow, and saw that I was not alone. I rubbed my eyes; and, after an involuntary sob or two, ascertained that the individual that hung over me was Jem.

"Jem," said I, "what means this? Why do you disturb me thus early? I have only just lain down, and must have some sleep."

"So I suppose, your honour," replied Jem, dejectedly. "The state of your dress, and the disorder in which I find you, proclaim as much; and yet it is within half an hour of morning parade."

I sprang out of bed; and, running towards the mirror, beheld reflected there a spectacle which quite unmanned me. My coat was torn from the collar to the skirt; my epaulet was gone; there was blood upon my face, which had run down so as to stain my very small-clothes, and a large black weal blocked up one of my eyes. Whatever indistinctness of memory might have heretofore attached to me, was dispelled in an instant. I recollected all that had taken place over-night; and, in an agony of remorse, which amounted well-nigh to despair, I threw myself down upon the bed again, and groaned aloud.

"It 's no use desponding now, sir," said Jem. "I need not ask what has happened; but if you wish to save your commission — if you hope to

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escape absolute ruin, rise and put yourself to rights a bit, and be in readiness to turn out when the drum beats. The colonel is on the prowl; and should you be absent, or even late, there 's no telling what may happen."

"I don't care what happens, Jem," replied I; "I am a lost man, in every sense of the word. They may take my commission from me, if they will; for I cannot fall lower than I am."

"Don't say so, my dear master," answered the kind and faithful fellow. "The money 's all gone, I dare say; I was prepared for that, as soon as I saw that you were bent on keeping your last night's engagement. But it can't be helped. It was all your own, and you had a right to do with it what you liked. So, pray, pray get up and dress; and we can talk things over, if you are so condescending as to open your mind to me, when the morning parade is ended. At all events, you are no worse than you were this time yesterday."

I would have fain resisted the affectionate creature's appeals, but he would take no denial; so I rose, threw off my soiled and tattered garments, and dressed for parade. I washed my face, too, carefully, and had the satisfaction to perceive that, except in the matter of the black eye, no serious traces of an affray adhered to me; but that was terrible.

"How can I show myself on parade, with such a stamp as this on my forehead?" demanded I.

"Pooh, pooh! never mind that," answered Jem. "Put on your cocked hat a little askew, and draw it down over the left side of your face; and nobody

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will notice, I 'll undertake to say, whether there be a mark there or not."

I acted upon Jem's suggestion, and flattered myself, when all was done, that a pretty close examination of my features would be necessary to trace out the bruise; and, as I had no reason to suppose that we were going to be more narrowly inspected than usual, I counted on passing muster. But I was mistaken: whether the colonel had received intimation of the fracas over-night, or that his hawk's-eye perceived at once that my bearing was somewhat different from what it used to be, I cannot tell; but I had scarcely taken my place in the ranks, when he called aloud to me,—

"Mr. Hargrove, why do you wear your hat in that slovenly and unsoldier-like fashion? Don't you know that his Majesty's regulations require it to be worn athwart ships? Put it to rights, sir, immediately, and don't let the point of it come over the line of your eye-brows."

I could not refuse to obey, of course; and the consequence was that, no sooner was the position of the hat shifted, than the swollen and blackened cheek became visible. The colonel did not permit it to pass unnoticed.

"Halloo, sir!" cried he; "what's the meaning of such a mark upon your face? Have you been boxing over-night, and setting an example to the men of riot and insubordination?"

"I met with an accident, sir," replied I, lowering my sword; "and would have asked leave to absent myself from parade, had there been time; but there was not."

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"And so you have come to disgrace yourself to the whole corps? Very well, sir; I have heard of some pretty doings in this part of the garrison; and, take my word for it, the truth shall be brought out. Mr. Jack, order a court of inquiry to assemble after parade, at the mess-room, to investigate certain matters affecting the credit of the regiment, and to report to me accordingly."

So saying, the colonel turned his attention to somebody else; and, by and by, his ill-humour having fully vented itself, the business of the parade went on. I need not add that to me it was an affair more than ordinarily irksome, or that when it came to a close, I was somewhat puzzled to determine whether I should not have been thankful to have had it indefinitely prolonged. As soon as the word "dismiss" was given, I hurried back to my quarters. Jem was there, as I expected; and so completely had the kind-hearted fellow won my confidence, that I proceeded at once to unburthen my sorrows to him, as if we had been on a footing of the most perfect equality. He bore the announcement of the loss of his money with the calmness of a stoic; he heard what I had to say concerning the brawl with patience, and did not seem alarmed at the prospect of the court of inquiry, though he had no more doubt than myself that it would have some reference to the affair in question.

"Nobody saw your honour," was his reply, "except they as won't bear witness against you. The colonel may suspect what he will; but where evidence is wanting, what are his suspicions worth?"

Jem's view of the case was at least a consolitary

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one; and, as the event proved, it was a just one. The court met; I was called upon to answer certain questions, which I did as vaguely and generally as I could. Other persons were in like manner examined, and with a like result; so that the report given in neither confirmed nor removed the suspicions with which the colonel professed to have been haunted. But he seemed determined to get rid of some of his officers at all events; and with me, at least, he succeeded. He sent for me to his quarters; and told me that though he might not be able just at that moment to bring any charge home, he had the best reasons to believe that I had been conducting myself in a very improper manner. "As to your debts," continued he, "they are notorious to all the garrison; and it is very unpleasant to me to be told that duns are for ever haunting the barracks where my regiment lies. Besides, there will be writs out against you immediately, if none be already issued, — and what is to become of you?"

I answered that I really did not know.

"Well then," replied he, "I will tell you what to do. Take yourself off to the south side of the town, and I will give you leave from parades and guards for a time. If in that interval you have any friend that will come forward and clear you, good and well; you shall return to your duty, and we may get an exchange for you into some other corps: but if not, you must take the consequences."

I could not conceal from myself that in what the colonel said there was a great deal of reason. From morning till night my room door had of late been beset by duns, and the language of some of them

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made me aware that they were not going to deal leniently with me any longer. I was, therefore, fain to accept his proposal, and prompt to tell him so. Perhaps it may be necessary to state what the south side of Gibraltar is. A sort of suburb, which lies beyond the inner line of works, yet is covered by the more advanced entrenchments, and subject to the English government, the south side, as it is called, enjoys so much of the character of an asylum, that no warrant, except that of the governor, may there be executed. Accordingly, when men become so completely involved that there is not only no peace for them elsewhere, but the constant danger of arrest, they remove into that suburb, where, if they can pay exorbitantly for a bad apartment, they have at least the assurance that no bailiff will break in upon it. As may be imagined, the party on the south side was far from being composed of the *élite* of the garrison. A sort of Alsatia on a small scale, it exhibits, on the contrary, features just as revolting as those which may be seen within the rules of the Bench, where men, grown reckless and hopeless, seem to take leave of all decency; and having no characters of their own, affect to despise the maintenance of character in another. In a word, the south side is to Gibraltar what Holyrood or the Abbey is to Edinburgh — a place of refuge, by keeping within the limits of which the unfortunate debtor is saved from the restraint of a narrower prison.

I really do not know why I should have entered so freely into the colonel's scheme; I knew perfectly well that there was no chance whatever of

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getting my debts paid — that I had no friend in the world who would so much as trouble himself to inquire after me; and hence that the smash, which my flight to the south side might defer, must come at last; yet, as men are always willing to put off the evil day let it threaten what it will, so I lost not a moment in transferring myself and my kit to the quarters which he had recommended. What a place it was! Even I, dissolute as I had already become, found some difficulty at first in reconciling myself to the manners of its inhabitants, whose most exalted ideas of happiness went no further than a free and uninterrupted indulgence in the lowest debauchery.

I never entertained the faintest hope that I should escape from the snare which had gathered round me. I felt that I was a ruined man; and the feeling produced in me the same results which it produces everywhere, — I became indifferent to everything. Even Jem's devoted affection, which continued to show itself in a variety of ways, ceased by degrees to move me. When he came to see me, I received him indeed, often in such a plight as made the poor fellow's heart ache. Nay, I confess with shame, that the little savings out of his pay, which from time to time he offered, I had not the manliness to refuse. But I lost all regard for him, for myself, and for the world, seeking only to steep my senses as much and as deeply as possible in forgetfulness. Let me not continue these details. The term of grace which the colonel had made out came to an end, without bringing with it any change in my circumstances. I was told that further indulgence

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could not be granted, and had the choice submitted to me either of resigning my commission or being brought to a court-martial. There was no room for deliberation: I sent in my resignation, got a passage in a transport which was under orders to return home; and, escaping by night from the sanctuary and my creditors, found myself next morning a considerable space out at sea.

The ship put in at Portsmouth harbour, whence I proceeded without delay to London, that I might throw myself on the compassion of my relatives, and make, with their assistance, one effort more to retrieve my fallen fortunes. I do not blame them for looking coldly upon me, I deserved no favour at their hands; but I think that if I had been differently dealt with, my fate would have been different. Perhaps this is a mere delusion — perhaps I was sunk so low in temper, in principle and habits, that to restore me to a becoming place in society would have been impossible: yet I well remember that my resolutions were all of the right sort; and that if to experience remorse be the first step towards amendment, by me it had been taken. Still I have no right to charge my uncle with cruelty because he received me sternly; while from my mother-in-law, who was likewise in town at the time, I never expected kindness. "You have brought disgrace, not only on yourself, but on all belonging to you," was my uncle's salutation, after I had succeeded in forcing my way into his presence. "You have cast behind you the only opening for which your education fitted you; and now you come, with a brand against your name, to ask that

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I shall do something for you. I tell you that I will have nothing to say to you. Go and shift for yourself; and if you cannot find honest employment, starve in the kennel — for I disown you."

From my uncle's, I went to the house of my mother-in-law, who did not award me a more favourable reception. She spoke, indeed, less harshly, because she was a woman; but she, too, declared that she neither could nor would stir hand or foot to help me. I fired up at the announcement, and withdrew. But where could I go, or what was I to do with myself? My purse was literally empty; I was an entire stranger in the great living desert of London; I had not broken bread for the last four-and-twenty hours; and I knew not where to seek shelter. Unconsciously, I wandered back in the direction of my uncle's; and, not having any object in view, lingered upon the pavement in front of it. A window was opened in one of the upper stories; and the head of a pretty girl, apparently about fifteen or sixteen years of age, was thrust out.

"You must not loiter near the house, cousin John," said she. "My father is so angry with you at present, that if he were to see you beside his door, I believe he would get you sent to prison. I know all your story, and blame you very much, but I pity you too; and if you will only keep quiet for a while, and try to conduct yourself better, I will use my best efforts to reconcile you to your uncle. Go away, and don't let him meet you again to-day."

"Whither can I go?" answered I, in great bitterness. "I am destitute — absolutely destitute. I

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have not the means to purchase so much as a meal, far less to hire a lodging. What would he have me do? Go and rob on the highway?"

"No, no; not that," replied my cousin. "He wishes you no evil; he will yet relent if you be prudent. There—take that, and live on it as long as you can; and when it is nearly expended, let *me* receive a note from you, and I will either send you a supply, or get my father to do so."

She threw a purse from the window as she spoke, which I caught; but I had no opportunity of thanking her; for when I looked up again, she was gone, and the blind had been drawn down, in token that she would hold no further conversation with me. Nevertheless, I bade God bless her, though she heard it not; and, finding that the purse contained a two-pound note, with seven shillings in silver, I went away to appease the cravings of hunger, which were by this time sufficiently violent. Yet, let me do justice to myself: I formed a solemn determination that, come what might, I should never again be guilty of one act out of which sorrow or shame could arise to any body; but that, devoting myself to the single purpose of making amends for the past, I should strive to deserve, as well as to win back, the esteem and confidence of my kindred.

My uncle lived in ——— street. It was by far too gay a quarter of the town for me; so I sought out an obscure lodging, in the very heart of the city, and there established my head-quarters. To my juvenile cousin I wrote, long before her bounty was expended, in order that both she and her

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father might watch, if they chose, the manner in which I conducted myself; and for nearly three weeks, over which I made my little pittance extend, no man's behaviour could be more correct. I stinted myself even in my food, living at the cheapest eating-houses; and as to drink, nothing stronger than water passed my lips. I do not deny that my sufferings all the while were terrible. Let not the moralist condemn too harshly or too soon the relapses of one who has at any period of his life been a drunkard. However earnest his desire may be to conquer the vice — however satisfied he is of its ruinous influence on mind, body, and estate, there is a craving within, which, as it amounts to disease, will not always be controlled; and if he once indulge it, no matter to how trivial an extent, then is all power of self-government taken from him. I know that had my very life hung in the balance, I could not have held out longer; and therefore, were my joy and gratitude without bounds, when, just as the reins were dropping out of my hand — just as I had begun to debate with myself whether or not I should treat resolution to a dram, I received a letter from my uncle, desiring to see me. I went immediately. He was still cold, but not quite so stern as he had been at a former interview. He said that throughout the last three weeks I had in all my movements been watched; and that he was willing to believe, from the reports which were brought to him, that I had begun a course of amendment.

"And now, John," continued he, "though I will make no promises — though I must have a much more extended experience of your reformation ere I

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use the slightest exertion to put you in a way of doing for yourself, I wish to show you that even your follies, gross and detestable as they are, have not cut you off from all sympathy on the part of your relations. Here is a supply of money for your immediate wants. Go and get yourself equipped like a gentlemen, and when that is done, come and dine with me. We shall be all alone to-day; and if you conduct yourself properly, it may not be the last dinner I shall give you. But, mind; everything depends upon yourself."

I had no right whatever to take offence at this address — I had no business with pride; yet my flesh seemed to creep as I accepted my relative's money, and I turned away from him without speaking. I suspect that he either did not observe the movement, or mistook the nature of the feeling which caused it; for he said nothing. I therefore left him, carrying with me the invitation, but without entertaining the most remote idea of acting upon it.

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CHAPTER VI.

DEEPER AND DEEPER STILL.

When I quitted my uncle's house I was like an insane person. All the follies of which I had myself been guilty were forgotten, while I thought only, in a spirit of unmitigated bitterness, of the insult which he had just put upon me. "Dine with him, because he is all alone; and perhaps, if I conduct myself to his satisfaction, I may be permitted to repeat the visit." I foamed at the mouth as the words passed my lips, and gnashed my teeth in agony. Every evil passion in my nature seemed, indeed, to set itself in motion; and I swore, with a violent oath, that I would not go near him. Can it be doubted to what excess this unfortunate adventure led? Instead of seeking out a tailor and providing myself with respectable apparel, of which, to confess the truth, I stood very much in need, I hastened to a well known tavern, where, for four days and nights, I gave unrestrained licence to the craving which had so long tormented me, and would not any further be suppressed.

Of all the species of bondage under which an unfortunate man can be brought, that which now exercised dominion over me is at once the most relentless and most degrading. During these four days, I was as little master of myself as if I had

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been born an idiot. The past and the future were equally blanks to me. I cared only for the degraded present; and, so long as my stock of bank notes lasted, the people in whose hands I had placed myself continued to treat me well. Whatever I chose to order was produced; and every night they carried me, in a state of stupor, to bed. But by and by my uncle's present came to an end, and with my means of paying for it the civility of my host's ended likewise. At last I was told point blank, that as they knew nothing about me, they could not serve me except for ready money. I stormed, of course, swore at and even struck the waiter, and was forthwith, in the most unceremonious manner possible, thrust to the door. I resisted with all my might, and a scuffle ensued, which, as the hour was late, soon drew the watchman to the spot. Against me, as might have been expected, the charge was made; and I was dragged off to the watchhouse.

What language would be adequate to describe the shame, remorse, and self-upbraiding to which, on the return of my senses, I became the prey. Even under ordinary circumstances, it would have grievously distressed me to find that I had incurred the disgrace of imprisonment; for, profligate as I was, all sense of self-respect had not abandoned me: but just at the moment, when character and station both hung in the balance, to be hurried into such a scrape, a scrape that could not be concealed — it was the act of a mere madman. I was not quite sober when, in company with a whole troop of street-walkers and pick-pockets, I was conducted to the Mansion-House, for the purpose of having my

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case heard. I knew that my brain still reeled, and that my bearing and manner were such as attend only upon him who has sat long over his cups. But even that haze was dispersed immediately on my arrival in the justice-room. From the dock into which I had been thrust, I looked up towards the magistrate's bench, and saw that two gentlemen were seated there. One was an entire stranger; the other — my God! my God! — it was my uncle. Let me draw a veil over the scene that followed. The space of time which sufficed to make him known to me, revealed me in like manner to him; and the expression of his countenance when our eyes met can never fade from my remembrance. I do not know what passed between him and the Lord Mayor — for the Lord Mayor it was who sat beside him; but to me no questions were put. The officers received directions to remove me from the dock; and I was conducted into a private room, as if some important examination had been anticipated. But no examination at all took place. After waiting here some time, a javelin-man came to inform me that I was at liberty to go; and, in a state of mind which beggars all attempt at delineation, I hurried into the street.

I had been furious against my uncle when he presented me with the fatal gift; I was now furious with myself for having so abused it. How thankful would I have been at that moment for leave to approach him on any terms, and to profess my bitter regret for the past! But between him and me I now felt that a gulf was indeed fixed, and that no efforts of mine would ever enable me to pass it. What was to become of me? whither should I go?

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"I could not dig, to beg I was ashamed;" and yet without one or other of these resources, how should I be able to exist? I have often wondered that on that occasion, above all others, I was not tempted to make away with myself. I never experienced so acutely the sense of absolute desperation either before or afterwards.

I wandered through the streets like one who walks in a dream. Thronged as they were with my fellow-creatures, some walking in haste as if full of business, some sauntering on with a careless tread — all passed me by unsaluted, unrecognised, and unnoticed. How terrible is the sense of loneliness in the midst of a crowd! I felt that day as he may be supposed to do whom society has forcibly ejected from its bosom. I was alone in the world — a being whom no one would own — of whom, living or dead, no note whatever would be taken; and the consciousness that I deserved to be so cast aside unmanned me quite. I wept like a child; and my tears, as they always do, brought me relief. "I will go home to my lodgings," said I; "the poor people used to behave civilly; perhaps they may continue their civility still; and if not, there are a few articles in the lodging, by the sale or pawning of which a trifle may be raised wherewith to sustain nature." So saying, I turned my face in the direction of my old quarters, and reached them without meeting with any adventure. I was received as one might expect to be of whose decease some rumour had gone abroad. My landlady stared, screamed, flew from me, and gave other symptoms of alarm, which, not without difficulty, I succeeded in appeas-

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ing. Finally, when I assured her that all was right, and that I was come for no other purpose than to resume my former station in her family, she tossed her head, turned up her nose, and looked unutterable things.

"Now then, just let me pass to my own room, will you?" said I.

"Your own room!" repeated she; "pray, sir, where is that?"

"Why, the room that I hired of you, and have occupied for the last three weeks."

"I know nothing about it," was her answer. "We let lodgings only to gentlemen; we don't have nothing to say to chaps as come out of spunging-houses."

"What do you mean, woman?" demanded I. "Is it your intention to refuse me admittance to my own apartment? Do you mean to keep my very clothes from me?"

"Your *clothes*, indeed!" exclaimed she, disdainfully. "A nice stock of clothes you had, surely! Three rags of shirts, with as many stockings, full of holes, and an old pair of shoes not worth a groat. Why, the whole concern wouldn't pay for the washing."

"Have you presumed to sell my effects?" said I, in a passion.

"Have you paid your rent for the last fortnight?" replied she; "and weren't you trying to do us out of it? Be pleased to take yourself off, unless you want a night's lodging in the watch-house; for you can't come in here, I tell you, and you shan't."

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"Give me my effects, then," demanded I.

"Give me my rent, and you shall have them," was the answer.

There was a wrangle, as might be expected. The landlady stuck to her assertion, that I was her debtor; I swore that I owed her nothing, and that she had robbed me; but my assertions carried no weight with them. Her husband, with one or two lodgers, came to her assistance, and I was fairly turned into the street.

"Well, then," said I to myself, growing hardened by the very accumulation of evil, "I may go where I will, and do what I please now. The world is literally before me; let's see what will come of it."

It was scarcely noon when I encountered the last rebuff, and I wandered about from street to street till dusk, not only not knowing what was to become of me, but in some sort indifferent to the matter. I knew that my appearance was altogether as disreputable as filth and squalor could make it; feeble, too, I was, rather from the effects of previous dissipation, than because my fast had not been broken throughout the day; and what was more, I was destitute of all means wherewith to procure so much as shelter for the night: yet, strange to say, I did not feel like one whom destiny has forsaken. On the contrary, there was upon my spirits a tendency to make light of the whole affair, for which I could not account; and once, when in passing a large mirror I saw my own image reflected there, I laughed aloud. But there were other and stranger adventures in store for me.

It was winter, and the day, which had been gusty

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and cold throughout, began, towards evening, to settle into rain. A heavy shower, indeed, fell; and I, obeying an impulse which was certainly not the result of reflection, took shelter under a covered passage that led out of Fleet-street. I was standing with my back to the wall, just within the influence of the rays of a lamp, when two men came from the interior of the court, and made for the mouth of the aperture. They paused there, apparently unwilling to face the storm; while one in a country accent demanded of the other, whether he thought it would last. I started, as the sound of the voice caught my ear. I turned hastily towards the speaker, who, as if the movement had excited his curiosity, looked me full in the face, and in a moment the recognition was mutual. "Jem! my kind and faithful Jem!" "Mr. Hargrove, is it you? is it indeed you yourself?" Why should I conceal anything? We rushed into each other's arms, and wept — I, at least, bitterly; Jem's was pure joy.

"Oh! where has your honour been hiding yourself this fortnight past?" demanded Jem. "Haven't I been after seeking for you, from the Tower all the way to Westminster, and back again. What have you been doing wid yourself? and how is it that I see you in this trim, now that I have found you?"

"And you, Jem, whence come you? What are you seeking in London? Why are you not with the regiment?"

"Faikes, thin, your honour, and I just gave them the slip. When I found that you was fairly gone, and no chance of seeing you no more, the thought

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of home in my own dear country just came over me like a dream; and I fretted, and I fretted, till one day I axed a sailor chap, whether he wouldn't stow me away in the hould of his ship, and keep me there till I got to England. And by the same token, he's a bit of a relation; becase he's married to my sister Judy, and is the father of two of my nevies. And so, just as they were gettin' up the anchor, I comes on board, never a soul in the garrison the wiser. My brother, here, took care of me, and gave me this sailor's rig, and himself came up to London with me, after we landed; and the devil another thing have we been doin' these few days past, than walkin' the streets, hopin' to fall in wid your honour And now, how has the world behaved to you, sir, and what are you doing?"

"The world has behaved better to me, Jem, than I to the world," answered I. "It's the old thing over again. I might have got on pretty well, but for the thing you wot of. Drink, Jem, drink has been and will ever be my ruin."

"Oh, then, the curse of Crumwell on that same dthrink!" replied Jem. "Isn't it I that have been praching to your honour these two years back, that the divil a good ever came to any man out o' that same dthrink?"

"Well, Jem, all that you say is true; but what then? The evil's done now, and there's an end of the matter."

"And where may your honour be hanging out just at this moment?"

"No where, Jem," replied I, with a laugh; "or rather everywhere — anywhere. I have positively

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not a home in the world. I know no more where I am to lay my head to-night, than ere a houseless vagabond in this great city."

"Blood and 'ounds! is it truth that you 're spaking? Have you no quarters of your own at all, at all?"

"None, Jem, as I am a man. I had a lodging, but the people thrust me out of it; and, just as you see me, without even a spare shirt or shoe, I am upon the world, cold, and fasting and weary."

"Now, then, by the piper that played before Moses, I 'm heartily sorry for your honour. We 've a bit of build, in a rookery down the alley; and sure, if y 'll condescend to share it with us, my brother Grady and me will be but too happy, and make room for you; though we can 't promise that it will be much to your mind, that are used to better."

By me, circumstanced as I was at that time, such an offer, coming from such a quarter, was not to be rejected. I thanked my old servant gratefully for his proposal, and was forthwith conducted by him and his companion down the court from which they had just emerged, towards a door at the lower extremity, which stood open. "We 're not afraid of thieves, you see," observed Jem, as he led the way through the aperture. "There 's mighty little within these four walls for anybody to carry off; yet there 's a good deal brought in too — now and then at least — isn't there, Grady?"

"Can 't you keep a quiet tongue in your head?" answered Jem's companion, sulkily. "You 're the blunderinest blockhead that ever I saw. A body had

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best have nothin' to do with the likes of you, where there's business to be done as needs secrecy."

I could not distinguish the speaker's face, for by this time the night had closed in; but there was something in the tone of his voice that did not please me, and his accent I discovered at once was not Irish. I made no remark, however, but continued to follow my leader, who conducted me up first one flight of steps, and then another, till we reached the garrets.

"Give us the key, Grady," said Jem, as he halted before a low door. "This is my ould officer of whom you've heard me spake; I'll be answerable for him wid my life—so give us the key, and send sulkin' to the devil."

"Sulkin' or not sulkin'," answered the individual thus addressed, "I say it's a d——d piece of folly to bring a stranger into the very nest; and by the same token, I'm blowed if I'll stand it. I won't give you the key, that's flat; I'll see you d——d first!"

"Phew!" whistled Jem, "hand out the key Joe, and have done with it. This gentleman won't go and tell the police that we carry on a little bit of business in the ——— line; will you, Mr. Hargrove?"

"I know nothing about your proceedings, and don't want to know," answered I; "neither have I any desire to force myself on any man's confidence—so I'll wish you good night, Jem, and find a lodging elsewhere for myself."

"No, no! hang it! you shan't do that neither," replied Jem's companion. "I'm sure, if you're the

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gentleman as saved Jem's life, we 've nothing to apprehend from you; so open the door, mess-mate, and let's try whether we can't make your officer comfortable for one night any how."

So saying, he handed the key to my faithful friend who, applying it to the lock, soon threw open the door. Let me describe the apartment into which I was ushered.

By the dull light of a turf fire, which smouldered rather than burned in the grate, I could just perceive that I had crossed the threshold of a chamber long, low, and very imperfectly ventilated. The roof lay — except for about five or six feet in the centre — on a slope of perhaps forty degrees. The light of day, when admitted at all, came through a solitary sky-light; and as this when we entered was tightly fastened down, the pressure of the atmosphere was extreme. In consequence, partly of this circumstance, and partly of the deep gloom in which all around me was enshrouded, I could not at first distinguish more; but I was not long kept in the dark. Grady, as Jem called him, made fast the door on the inside; Jem himself lighted a lamp, under the rays of which all that had hitherto preserved an air of mystery, became manifest. I observed, that if there was little furniture in the place, tools of various kinds were abundant. On a rickety table lay scattered about a variety of files, crucibles, clippers, and several dies. A large assortment of quart pots, some of them whole, others broken or bent together, were huddled into a corner; while lumps of clay, doubtless applied to the purpose of making moulds, were tossed about hither

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and thither with a very free hand. In other respects, I noticed but a solitary bedstead, uncurtained, and feeble in the extreme. There were also a couple of stools, and a chair — the latter with its back broken; while a portion of a mirror, suspended over the chimney-piece, proved that the coiners were not quite neglectful of the duties of the toilet.

"Your honour's surprised at the sort of habitation I've got into," said Jem, observing that I looked about me like one who was bewildered; "and, mayhap, you think we've brought you here to starve you: but you're mistaken; there's both mate and dthrink in the house, and the manes of dressing it too; and sure your honour knows I can fry a collop with the best on'em."

As he said this, Jem drew a frying-pan from beneath the bed; and, opening a little closet, produced some slices of pork, which, together with a cold potato or two, he proceeded at once to make ready. I confess that the odours which the process of cooking sent forth, acted upon my olfactory nerves in the most satisfactory manner. My appetite, which the consciousness, perhaps, that I was without the means of appeasing, had kept dormant throughout the day, revived to an extent which was quite surprising; and to Jem's viands, as soon as they were spread out before me, I did ample justice. Neither did I regret the modicum of gin with which, not less than with more substantial vivres, the place was supplied. In a word, I made a capital supper; and my two hosts, apparently gratified by the sort of testimony which was thus borne to their benevo-

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lence, expressed no other regret than that I left off eating at all. Then followed a carouse, over which we became the best friends possible; and finally, a surrender of the bedstead to me; while the confederates, spreading a blanket on the floor, lay down and slept soundly.

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CHAPTER VII.

THINGS DON'T GO SMOOTHLY; BUT I HAVE ANOTHER CHANCE.

THE situation in which I now found myself was to me quite novel; and, as there is a certain charm in novelty, whatever be the form which it assumes, I cannot say that for a time, at least, I much disliked it. Jem and his associate were, as may have been surmised already, professional imitators of the coin of the realm. To the former, indeed, the business was new, for he had but just been drawn into it by his hopeful relative, whose career, from early childhood, presented one unbroken series of offences against the law; but the latter was a practised hand at it. It was not the first nor the second time that he had carried on the trade, subject to unpleasant interruptions, to be sure, but still successfully; and now, after a year's absence from Town, which he had spent on board ship, as a convenient place of concealment, he was returned to his original vocation, Jem heedlessly acting as his assistant. I am not, however, going to describe the process by which the business was carried on. The operation of coining took place only at intervals, and then immediately after dark; while, on the following day, Grady, as I remarked, took his goods abroad, and disposed of them in the lump. I am bound to

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declare that never, either directly or indirectly, was I aiding and abetting in the fraud upon the public. I made a point either of going abroad while the partners pursued their vocation, or I lay down ere they began, and slept, or pretended to sleep; but I never so much as asked a question; and as to working with them, that I carefully avoided. At last, I began to grow anxious, not only on my own account, but on Jem's also, and I determined to speak to him.

"Why, you foolish fellow," said I, one day when Grady chanced to be from home, and Jem and I were left together. "Are you aware of the consequences, should the police happen to catch you at your tricks?"

"Och, then, and the divil a consequence," was Jem's reply. "Hasn't Grady tould me that there's no harm in the thing, bating only that it's best done quietly. For why? sure we sell our shillings for twopence a-piece, and them as comes from the Mint costs twelve."

"Take you care, nevertheless," replied I, "that the gentlemen from the Mint don't get you into their clutches. I would not give much for your chance of abiding on this side the herring-pond if they once nab you."

Jem stared, as if he scarcely comprehended my meaning; nor was an opportunity afforded of explanation at the moment; for Grady entered, just as I was preparing to discuss the point, and I had only time to put my finger on my lip as a signal of silence. I suspect, however, that either the motion was noticed, or that Grady observed in our general manner something that startled him; for he scowled,

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as he took his seat, first upon the one, and then upon the other.

"It's no use trying to live idle, Jem," said he, after a pause; "and it wont serve our purpose to row in different boats. Your ould master must take a share in the labour as well as the profit, if he bide here; for we must knock off a fresh batch of shiners this very night. There's one wants 'em in the morning as 'ill take no denial."

"So be it," answered Jem, "I'm your man; and your honour 'ill hould the gluepot, anyhow, till the metal runs, won't you?"

"I can have nothing to do with such a proceeding," answered I. "Betray you, I will not; but I can't put my neck in the noose on such a venture; and I advise you, Jem, to wash your hands of it as soon as possible."

"What's that he says?" exclaimed Grady. "He won't row in our boat, won't he? Very well; it's time for one of us to take care of himself."

Grady rose and left the room, without speaking another word.

"That fellow will betray you, Jem," cried I. "Take my word for it, he'll sell us both. Let's quit this place at once, or evil will come of it."

Jem seemed just as much at a loss to understand me this time, as he was when I first spoke to him of the true nature of his employment. He began by asserting that there was nothing to betray; and ended by swearing that he would trust his brother-in-law, Phil. Grady, for life and salvation. Still, as I persisted in my arguments, Jem's obstinacy gave way to them; not, as he assured me, out of any disre-

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spect for his relative, but because there was nothing he would not do to serve my honour. Accordingly, he gathered together the few articles of wearing apparel that belonged to him, tied them up in a handkerchief, and, grasping a stout stick in his hand, declared his willingness to accompany me over the world. For me, I had nothing to pack. Except the soiled and threadbare suit which I wore, I was absolutely destitute of baggage; and as to money, I believe that, between us, we were able to muster three shillings and sixpence.

"We are a bold pair of fellows, Jem, truly," said I, "to face the world's scorn, shirtless, coatless, penniless; and yet it's better to be outside a prison-wall than in."

"A thousand-fold, your honour," answered Jem. "For why? haven't we hands and feet?"

I did not quite see the logic of Jem's conclusion, though I made no pause to dispute it; so forth we sallied, an hour or two after noon, on a clear frosty day in December, to dare as we best could whatever rubs and crosses fortune might judge it expedient to try us withal.

I really cannot pretend to account for the fact of our having lived at all throughout the ten or twelve days which immediately followed this migration. Jem's money, though carefully hoarded, was spent at last: and then Jem and his little kit went to the pawnbrokers; but the produce of these proved the reverse of exhaustless, and we were by and by as near the starving point as ever. At length, excess of misery began to produce in us the same effects which it produces elsewhere: we

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lost our temper one with the other, and angry words passed between us.

"I can't stand this any more," cried I, when after a day's fast we had crept beneath the shelter of a ruined house in the Minories. "I'll go 'list, Jem; and if you take my advice, you 'll come with me."

"Oh, yes, and be given up as a deserter to the regiment. I 'd rather drown myself in the Tower ditch."

"Drown and be d—d," said I, like a savage as I was. "You hear my determination. I go in the morning to St. James's-park, and the very first sergeant that speaks to me, I take on with him."

"And leave me to my fate," said Jem. "Well; I didn't think you would have deserted me after all, Mr. Hargrove."

To the hour of my death I shall never cease to look back upon what followed with remorse and self-upbraiding. I was cold, hungry, ill, desperate. I could not endure what sounded like the language of remonstrance, and I swore at poor Jem as if he had done me wrong. He, too, was made irritable by excess of suffering, and he answered me in my own tone. Oh, shame, shame, shame! I struck him, and we fought like wild beasts. But here I had entirely miscalculated the chances. Jem was by far the more robust of the two; and all that I got for my violence and folly was a sound drubbing.

I escaped from Jem's Herculean grasp not without difficulty; and, mad with rage and passion, fled from the spot. Had an opportunity offered,—and I sought it, God forgive me, with eagerness,—I would have denounced him on the instant as a de-

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serter. But the Tower gates were shut, the drawbridge was up, and nobody would listen to me. I turned away, therefore, in a state not far removed from insanity, and walked on, and on, and on, as if I had been flying for my life. Street after street was left behind; the interminable labyrinths of vast London were threaded; and, without in the least degree desiring to accomplish such a purpose, I felt that the free air of the country was blowing round me. But my frame, enfeebled by recent suffering, and shaken to pieces in the struggle with Jem, would not sustain the spirits' excitation beyond a certain point. My brain reeled, a thick mist came over my eyes; I was conscious that I staggered in my gait, and my thoughts wandered. I fell down by the roadside, and became insensible.

I do not know how long I may have lain in that plight; but when I recovered, I found myself in bed, at an inn in Romford, with a number of persons surrounding me, and, as it appeared, a good deal of excitement among them. One of them I soon discovered to be a medical man; for, scarcely were my eyes opened, ere he seized my wrist, and, feeling my pulse, asked in a particularly gentle tone of voice, how I felt.

I was going to answer, but he stopped me.

"Your constitution has sustained a terrible shock. You must keep quiet; it is as much as your life is worth to make the smallest exertion now. You will tell us all about it by and by, when you are better."

As I had nothing to tell, of which there would be cause to be proud, I was very happy to receive such instructions; so, closing my eyes again, I

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leant back upon the pillow, and pretended to sleep. Meanwhile, a good deal of conversation went on around me, in a subdued tone.

"Do you think he will recover, doctor?" demanded a soft and gentle voice, which, though I had heard it only once in my life before, I instantly recognised.

"Oh, yes," was the reply; "I have no doubt of it. He appears to have suffered a good deal, and is very feeble and emaciated; but with good nursing, all this will be got over. I'll answer for his recovery."

"Thank God!" replied the female voice; "it would be terrible to see a fellow-creature die under such circumstances."

"Did you see anything of the ruffians, ma'am?" demanded a third speaker—a woman, also.

"No," interposed a fourth voice, which I knew to be my uncle's. "We found the poor fellow lying in a ditch by the roadside, and there were traces of blood near him; but it was broad day when we passed, and the robbers would scarcely linger about their victim long enough to expose themselves to detection."

A sudden light broke in upon my brain, though there was still something of shade over it, too. It was clear that the parties to whom I stood indebted for my removal hither, were my uncle and cousin. It was equally certain that they wished to impress the people at the inn with a persuasion that I had fallen among thieves. In this they had succeeded; but whether the story was invented by themselves, aye, and whether they were as yet aware of the identity of him to whom their bounty had been ex-

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tended — these were points which could not be determined till after I should have had with them some conversation. Meanwhile, one fact was evident enough — another chance of recovery from my fallen estate was afforded me; and in the bitterness of remorse, I prayed to God that I might find strength and temper to take advantage of it.

I kept perfectly quiet for a couple of hours, some warm jelly having been administered; and then, unable any longer to restrain the nervous anxiety which preyed upon me, I begged that my benefactor would give me a few minutes' private conversation. The doctor, to whom I made the request, and from whom I had been informed of the manner of my arrival at Romford, seemed at first unwilling to indulge me; but I urged the point with so much vehemence, that he finally consented. He withdrew, accordingly, carrying the nurse along with him; and the next moment my uncle was at the bedside. Not for an instant did he either pretend ignorance of my person, or affect to be in doubt as to the probable cause of the evil which had befallen me.

"I see exactly how it is, and I have no wish," he continued, "to inquire into particulars. Your dress, and the situation in which I found you, alike assure me that you have been associating with the lowest and most depraved of mankind. Will this ever have an end?"

"I cannot deny it, sir," was my answer. "Poverty, and the absence of all means whereby to better my condition, have reduced me to what you see. It is all my own fault, to be sure; but — but there is nothing in such a reflection to render the

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tooth of remorse less sharp. It would have been well had you left me to perish where you found me."

"Perhaps it might, John," answered he; "but that was impossible. And now, having got you in hand once more, quite unintentionally, I assure you — quite contrary to the resolution which I had formed, I wont desert you altogether. What can you do? Are you a man of business? Do you profess to be master of any mechanical art?"

"Neither one nor the other, sir. I am not fit to live; I can do nothing at all for myself."

"This comes of the sort of education you have received, and the example that was before you. Well, I suppose if one were to put a red coat upon your back again, you would try to keep it there, like a gentleman?"

"If I did not, even upon your compassion, sir, I should have no further claim."

"Well, we 'll see what can be done. In the mean while, here is a five-pound note for you. Your doctor's bill I will settle, as well as the expenses — the necessary expenses, mark you — of your keep in this house. You will get back to London as fast as you can, and fix yourself in some cheap lodging till you hear from me; of course you will send me your address by the twopenny post."

I thanked my uncle, promised to attend to his directions, and saw him no more. He quitted the room without so much as saying God bless you, and we never met afterwards.

Was I satisfied with all this? Quite the reverse. It has been the one great fault in my disposition, that I could never endure to be treated as an infe-

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rior; that even acts of kindness have been gall and wormwood to me, as often as I seemed to be indebted for them to the condescension of a superior. In such a case as mine, the feeling is not only bad, but it is ridiculous. What had I to do with pride? Yet I acknowledge that when my uncle left me, there remained in my memory only the impression of his haughty bearing and disdainful tone of voice. The substantial favours which he both conferred and promised were forgotten. So keen, indeed, was the sense of mortification that, had I not been prevented from taking the step by physical weakness, I believe that I should have quitted Romford forthwith, and taken my chance, single-handed, against the world. Two or three days of severe indisposition came, however, to the aid of my better genius. I had time to cool, and, in my cooler moments, to consider the inevitable consequences of the step; and the result was, that I made up my mind to make use of my relative's interest, while, at the same time, I took care not to throw myself, if I could avoid it, into his society.

Good nursing, and a judicious supply of wholesome victuals, soon brought me round; and at the end of a week I was fit to travel. I repaired immediately to London, where, in an obscure, though not disreputable lodging, I fixed my head quarters. Meanwhile my uncle had not been forgetful of his promise. He expressed no wish to see me; he never wrote to me with his own hand, nor took any other notice of me; but once he caused his chief clerk to inclose a bank-note for my outfit; and, not long afterwards, the same authority informed me

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that I had been appointed to an ensigncy in the ——— militia. The Gazette of the following day confirmed this intelligence; and so, for the second time, I found myself in the station and employment of a gentleman.

The London militia regiments — the successors of the train bands — differed so entirely from all other like bodies in the kingdom, in their composition and the order of their duties, that it may not be out of place if I give some account of them. Raised, maintained, and disciplined at the exclusive expense of the city, their proper rank was that of a municipal guard rather than a portion of the military force of the empire. The privates, recruited from among the industrious classes of citizens, such as porters, warehousemen, draymen, and the like, dwelt in their own homes, or occupied billets in public houses, where they followed, day by day, their ordinary callings, with but few and unimportant interruptions. Each battalion furnished, indeed, its daily guard, and both officers and men came to it in military attire. There were occasional parades likewise, at which everybody attended in uniform; but except on these occasions, the members of the corps were not distinguished from their fellow-citizens even by their dress. In like manner the officers took a much deeper and more lasting interest in the concerns of their civil business, which they respectively followed, than in the performance of their military duties. They were all shopkeepers — most of them at the head of establishments — some, principal clerks, and others of a humbler degree; and I must do them the justice to

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add, that a body more unmilitary in appearance, manner, and train of thought, never came together. Like the men whom they commanded, they dwelt at home; and girded on their swords only when some emergency required.

If the officers of the ——— regiment had, as a body, very little of the *esprit militaire* among them, there were not wanting individuals who did their best to acquire it; and these, finding that in other respects the lesson was hard to learn, betook themselves to the study of what they were pleased to consider — military vices! It was quite edifying to hear these gentlemen swear; their zeal in getting drunk as often as the opportunity of doing so in harness occurred, was very commendable; and for the rest, cards and grog at their quarters found numerous admirers, especially among the younger members of the corps. In the ——— regiment of the line I had seen a good deal of this latter amusement, where some pretension to gentlemanlike diversion threw a veil over its grossness; but in the ——— militia we had all the vice, without one jot or tittle of refinement to hide or disguise it. I was an idle man; I had no resources within myself. My tastes were not such as they ought to have been, and the habits of the sporting members of the corps suited me. Woe, woe is me! — why should I go on?

I retained my commission in the ——— militia about twelve months. With my uncle all that while I held no communication, neither did my mother-in-law notice me. I thought that they were to blame for thus casting me off. I fancy that if

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they had noticed me — not contemptuously as had hitherto been the case — but kindly and freely, I might have been reclaimed, and become a respectable member of society; but this is uncertain. At all events, they pursued an opposite course, and I soon ceased to think of them except with loathing. But why continue details which, without serving any good end, must sink me continually lower in the estimation of the right-minded.

Embarrassments overtook me again. I was guilty of the grossest irregularities; and one day, on parade, the colonel found fault with me in a tone which my proud and irritable temper could not brook. I answered him warmly, and bade him recollect that I wore a sword as well as he. This was not to be endured even in a regiment of city militia. I was placed in close arrest; and, to save a court-martial the trouble of breaking me, I resigned my commission.

Now then, at length it was impossible to hide from myself that fate had done her worst. From the station and rank of a gentleman I was shut out for ever; there could be no more chance of my passing the magic threshold again. I felt this; yet, strange to say, the conviction very little affected me. On the contrary, I was much more master of myself — much more awake to the necessity for exertion than I had been either at the period of my expulsion from the —th, or afterwards, when the vision of my uncle on the seat of justice seemed to wither me. "I 'll go and enlist as a private soldier," said I. "What 's the use of starving about the

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streets of London, or doing worse? — I 'll go and enlist."

The walls were at that time covered with placards, which invited young men to enter the king's service. I read them one after another, and passed on, till I found myself, with a bundle over my arm, and a few shillings in my pocket, at Croydon, in Surrey. There a different sort of invitation met me; for a ballot had recently taken place, several young gentlemen had been drawn for the militia, and large bounties were offered to such as would take service in their room. I closed with a proposal of the sort immediately. I offered myself as a substitute, was accepted, passed the surgeon's examination, and took the oath. Fifteen pounds were then handed over to me; and I marched off, with other recruits, to join the head-quarters of the regiment.

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CHAPTER VIII.

A TOTAL CHANGE OF CONDITION.

THE home career of a private soldier, whether he be attached to a militia corps or a regiment of the line, presents few features which it is worth any man's while to describe in detail. A barrack-room, such as it used to be at least in 1806, is not the nursery of many pure or generous feelings; neither, I lament to say, were the most judicious methods adopted to create them. Everything was then done with the strong hand. Punishment, perpetual punishment was the sole impulse to obedience; and as the officer bullied the sergeant, the sergeant bullied the corporal, the corporal the private, and the old soldier the recruit. Moreover, nothing delighted the mass so much as to get among them an unfortunate individual who might have seen better days. "The gentleman," as such a person was termed, became a mark for all manner of insult and wrong; and, what was worse, it was next to impossible to find redress anywhere. The life of a dog that is driven in a costermonger's cart deserves to be accounted a life of ease, when compared with that which I had in the East Surrey militia. I had no rest, night or day; so that, in sheer despair, I embraced the earliest opportunity of volunteering,

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and passed into the ranks of the ——— regiment of foot.

The depôt of the ——— regiment lay at that time in the Isle of Wight; whither I, in common with other volunteers, was sent to learn my duty. I found both that, and the general treatment awarded to me, widely different from anything with which my experience as a militia-man had rendered me familiar. There was no bullying within doors; there was very little unnecessary severity without; and drill and parades, and the routine of guard-mounting and sentry, all became by degrees familiar. I began, indeed, to experience something like a sense of rest; that is to say, I would have done so, had there not been a little worm within whose gnawing ceased not: but the more I was relieved from external grounds of annoyance, the more continually my own thoughts became my tormentors.

"I have done wrong," said I, "utterly wrong. I have abused the advantages I possessed, and cast every chance behind me. No wonder that these distant relatives should have thrown me off. But my father, if I could only return to him; surely, surely he would take pity upon me even yet." I have no power of language in which to describe the tenacity with which this idea fixed itself in my mind. I brooded over it perpetually. I dreamed about it when I slept; I had no peace for it day and night. At last the thought struck me, that an exchange into one of the regiments which were on service in India might be accomplished; in which case, my father's will to befriend me could be tested; and, in a fit of enthusiasm, I went to the commandant of

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our depôt, and told him the truth. He shook his head, and assured me that he had little hope that good would arise from the arrangement, to me. "But you will assist me, sir, in effecting the exchange?" exclaimed I. "Surely," was his answer: "there can be no difficulty about that. Any soldier volunteering for service in India is allowed to join the depôt of an Indian regiment. I advise you, however, to consider the point well; for the step once taken, cannot be recalled."

I had already considered the matter well. I had but one vision in my brain. I did volunteer the same day, and was transferred to the depôt of the ——. In about six weeks afterwards I went on board ship, and, to my exceeding delight, found myself on my passage to Calcutta.

We had a tedious and uncomfortable voyage. The vessel was crowded; and the accommodations allotted to such as I, are never on board ship too commodious; besides all which, the winds, till we got into "the trades," were baffling, and our progress was slow. We put in, moreover, at Ceylon, where the troops landed; and there, very much to my own chagrin, I did for some months garrison duty. I cannot express the extent to which this delay in the accomplishment of my plans distressed me. I was sure that from my father I should meet with the reception which I desired; and this conviction not only cheered me while contemplating the future, but produced the best effect upon my disposition in the present. I committed no single irregularity; indeed, I believe, that among the whole batch of recruits that came on shore I was noted for

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the steadiness and propriety of my bearing. But the knowledge of all this furnished no consolation under the misery of hope deferred; and while listening to the commendations of those that were in authority over me, I thought only of the hour which should set me free from the restraints under which I laboured. It came at last. A ship bound for Calcutta happening to put in, the drafts for the several regiments on the Bengal establishment were sent on board; and in due time I found myself — how changed in tastes, hopes, and situation!—again a sojourner in the capital of the British empire in India.

When troops land at either of the Presidencies from Europe, they are mustered, as a matter of course, and have quarters assigned them, till the proper season shall arrive for sending them to the stations where it is designed permanently to keep them. The draft for the —— regiment underwent the usual examination: and it struck me, that when my name was called over, the inspecting officer looked hard at me, as if I had been to him an object of some curiosity. I could not at the moment tell why, but my heart misgave me. I suspected that all was not right; and a little while sufficed to confirm that suspicion. It had been my intention from the outset, not to give my father warning, but to make my way to him with as little delay as possible, and throw myself on his natural affection for forgiveness. With this view I went to the officer in command; and telling him as much of my story as I judged expedient, requested leave to proceed on furlough to Hugley. To my unspeakable amaze-

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ment, not only was the furlough refused, but I was told, that I must consider myself a prisoner in the barracks. I demanded an explanation, but received none. The officer had orders to send me, under an escort, up the country; and I was not to quit his sight, or, at all events, to pass beyond the garrison, till the route should arrive. What could I do? I hung my head in despair; and, going back to my quarters, ceased from that moment to take the slightest thought of what to-morrow might bring forth.

I have little to tell respecting my thirteen years' service in India, which could render my narrative different from that of private soldiers in general. Though there was war in the country, that with the Nepaulese in particular, I took no part in it; for the regiment to which I belonged was never engaged with the enemy. My military life, therefore, is, to all intents and purposes, a blank. But, to myself individually, sundry accidents befel, which contributed, in their several degrees, to confirm my character, and make me what I am, a poor pensioner of Chelsea Hospital. I was not slow in discovering that my movements, as well as the motives which produced them, had all been communicated to my father. On his part, again, there existed no other feeling than the determination neither to see nor acknowledge me. It was through his interest that I made my journey up the country, not with my own depôt, but under a guard of royal artillery, which had strict charges to treat me well, but never to let me pass out of their sight. In like manner, when I joined the head-quarters of my corps at

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Burhampoor, a proposition was made that I should return without delay to England; nay, it was announced to me by the adjutant, that I should be ordered back, and conveyed, if necessary, by force, on board ship. Against these schemes I vehemently protested; and, making my way to the quarters of the general in command, I laid such a statement of facts before him as caused the project, if it had ever been entertained with seriousness, to be laid aside. Next came an offer, directly from my father, that he would give me three hundred rupees provided I would volunteer for Java. Now, Java happened at that time to be particularly unhealthy, and the troops in garrison were dying very fast. I therefore spurned the proposal, and desired the individual who made it to say, that my life was little worth, but that I would not barter it for so poor a price. But why go on? I soon ascertained, beyond the possibility of doubt, that my father's feelings towards me were as bitter and stern as possible; and the last rock on which I had ventured to lean being shivered beneath me, I became utterly reckless.

If there was no pity in the breast of the author of my being, from the officers of my corps I received every indulgence. Several of them employed me in teaching their children to read and write: and, on the plea that I was occupied in these matters, they exempted me from guards, and other more unpleasant duties. I found also, that there were, among the servants of the Company, several who compassionated my state, and were not indisposed to befriend me, as far as circumstances would

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allow. I got at various stations breakfasts, dinners, luncheons, and trifling presents of money from men who either were acquainted with my father, or knew that I was the son of a gentleman; and by and by, through the influence of one of these, I was appointed to a permanent situation. The Governor-General of India has, at some little distance from Calcutta, a menagerie, or receptacle for wild beasts, somewhat on the plan of our own Zoological Gardens. It was judged expedient to appoint a European to the general superintendence of that establishment, with a salary more than adequate to the maintenance of a man not in the position of a gentleman. On the ground that I was more master of the native languages than any other person of my rank in the place, the office of superintendent was conferred upon me; and in the year 1822 I received a discharge from the Governor-General, and proceeded to my post.

I have never been able to resist the temptations to which prosperity exposed me. Had I possessed ever so small a share of self-control, I might have done well in the menagerie; for the duties were few and simple, the pay was abundant, and all my wants were supplied, even to gratuitous attendance on my person. But the loneliness of my situation told against me; and, thought finding leisure to work wrought so violently, that I resolved, let the cost be what it might, to stifle it. Oh shame! oh sin! oh sorrow! I returned to the habit from which for some years I had escaped, and became, ere long, a fixed and incurable sot. The consequence need hardly be stated. Finding that I ceased

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by degrees to look after them, the native keepers neglected their duty. Several of the most rare and valuable animals in the collection died; and the results of an inquiry were, that I was sent about my business.

By this time my father had paid the debt of nature. He died at Hugley, in 1822. I have no reason to believe, that had he lived to be informed of my disgrace, he would have made any effort to replace me in a situation of respectability. If he took part at all in obtaining for me that which was now forfeited, and I believe that he did,—the secret was faithfully kept from me; but however this might have been, to look for more at his hands, after all that had occurred since my arrival in India, would have convicted me of madness. Yet, strange to say, I felt, on entering Calcutta, that I had never before been so entirely alone in the world. I had little courage to make applications to strangers, and those which I did make were rejected, as they deserved. Men would not listen to the protestations of one who had shown himself so little trustworthy; and, except by a trifling alms, doled out with niggardly hands, they one and all refused to aid me. I really do not know how, throughout an interval of many months, I contrived to keep soul and body together. One of my devices was, I recollect, to offer myself as a teacher of English to the grandsons of Tippoo Saib; but the father, though he admitted me into his house, soon got tired of me, and, under the pretext that I was not sufficiently master of the Bengalee, dismissed me at the close of a week. Then back I came to the town, more helpless, as well

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as hopeless, than before, rising often and often profoundly ignorant how food might be provided for the day, and going to sleep again, wherever I could find shelter, without daring to ask myself what the morrow might bring forth.

I was thus a friendless and destitute vagabond in my native country (for I had been discharged without a pension), when the Burmese war broke out. As a soldier the Company would have scarcely received me; nor, to confess the truth, was I at all desirous of enlisting in their service; but I found a berth on board of one of their armed cruisers, and sailed in her to Rangoon. There, while the troops occupied their first and most unfortunate position, we lay at anchor in the river, and there I received a hurt which rendered me unfit for further service. I was helping to land some military stores, when my foot slipped upon the deck; and I fell with such violence that, being heavily laden at the moment, my back sustained an injury from which it has never wholly recovered. I was sent back to Calcutta, invalided, and paid off; and so thrown, once more, upon my own resources.

Up to this date, my history has described little else than a series of follies and vices, and misfortunes arising, by the natural course of things, out of these follies and vices. While lying on the bed of sickness, I had both leisure and inclination to reflect, and I thank God that my reflections were not absolutely wasted. I saw the error of my ways; and, in deep humility and contrition, I prayed to be forgiven. I believe that the prayer was heard: as strength returned, my vicious inclinations did not

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return with it; and I became, for the first time in my life, a religious man. I joined myself to the company of those whose delight it was to go with the multitude to the house of God, among such as keep holy the day; and I am sure that a blessing attended my proceedings. Not that the clouds were as yet withdrawn from either my moral or my physical horizon: I had my moments of terrible weakness still; and as far as my worldly prospects were concerned, there was no appearance of dawn—no prospect of better things to come, in any quarter; but, at least, I was conscious of a large increase of energy. "Why should I remain in India?" said I. "There is nobody here to care for me; the opportunities of providing for myself are scanty. I will return to England while yet there are a few rupees in my pocket, and it may be that Providence will there find an opening for me." The idea no sooner occurred, than it was acted upon. I applied for and got leave to work my passage home, in a ship which was preparing to weigh anchor; and the very next day, was in full career down the Hoogley.

If the great heart of London were laid open, to how many strange and contradictory revelations would the looker-on be admitted! I allude not now to the moral and physical state of the mighty mass which, for good or for evil, is there congregated. They have their mysteries and concealments too; but if there were anywhere the power to make known the true condition even of the smaller stream of human beings, which day by day passes into the regal city and passes out again, how would our

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ordinary notions of men and things, yea, even of human nature itself, and of the influence which controls and orders its working, be outraged and set at nought! All is for the best, doubtless. This is the language not of Scripture only, but of sound philosophy also, because individuals are but mites in the sum of created beings; and joy and sorrow terms which, however universally in use, admit, in the abstract, of no interpretation. Still, I am inclined to suspect, that were the veil which covers us as a body, withdrawn, the wisest and most trusting would discover things, for which their faith itself had not prepared them. It is not, indeed, a new sight, to behold the beggar happy in his penury, and the wealthy miserable amid his luxuries. Many a bright eye appears to beam with joy when the gentle heart is bursting, and the loudest laugh not unfrequently seeks to hide a broken spirit. But who, even if he had courage to investigate these points and probe them to the bottom, would dare to go further? The schemes and devices which fill men's minds — their hopes, their fears, and the grounds of both,—what a hideous picture would these present, were they made manifest in their deformity! Ay, and more than this. The amount of suffering, which springeth not of evil, the placidity and self-assurance with which the villain goes forward with his villany, the success which attends upon schemes formed for purposes of ill, and the constant and inexplicable failures of their opposites, — truly it is best, that over all these a covering should be spread, beneath which no eye, save that of the Omnipotent, can pass. I fear, that were it

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otherwise, there would need all our religion, and more than all our reason, to convince us, that the ways of Providence are equal.

Like many hundreds besides myself, I entered London one gloomy night in November, not only having no definite object before me, but totally incapacitated by circumstances, which I could not control, for forming any. I did not so much as know where I should find a roof to cover me; nor, when the pittance that still remained of wages should have been expended, how the commonest necessaries of life were to be procured. I had, be it observed, no parish; for, born in India, I had never resided long enough in any one place to establish my right to a settlement; and, had the contrary been the case, my gorge still rose at the idea of finding my home in a workhouse. Yet, I landed at the Docks, took my bundle ashore, and trudged on through Blackwall towards the Minories, as if a knot of kind relatives or friends were there expecting me. My resort, as may be imagined, was to one of the poorest of the lodging-houses in that district; where to spin out my little hoard, and make it last, constituted, for a time, the single occupation of my life.

I must be pardoned if I refuse to enter into any minute detail of the mode in which I lived throughout the six months that immediately succeeded my return to London. My career was not such as will bear a recital, for it brought me acquainted with strange company; yet, this much I am bound to say, that I was not tempted, no not in a single instance, to commit an act of dishonesty. I have held horses, I have gone errands, I have swept a

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crossing and craved an alms; but I never stole, nor swindled, nor defrauded, nor otherwise brought myself under the lash of the law, or of my own conscience. To my relatives I never applied: it would have been useless to do so; and my own pride, still, perhaps, misplaced, revolted at the chances of a refusal. But sheer suffering drove me at last to solicit the assistance of a gentleman high in office, to whom the particulars of my history were not unknown. Through him I was enabled to bring my claim for a pension before the commissioners of Chelsea Hospital. At first, they seemed inclined to reject it, on the ground that my discharge had been applied for as a matter of private convenience; but, by and by, they saw the case in another light; and ninepence a-day was secured to me. Neither did my excellent patron's good offices end there. The Board of Ordnance gave me employment in Tooley Street, with pay at the rate of fifteen shillings per week; and so long as that establishment was kept up, I had nothing whereof to complain; but economy became by degrees the order of the day, and I, with many other labourers, was discharged. Ninepence a-day is, doubtless, better than nothing; yet ninepence will not go far to provide a man with food, clothing, and a house. My sufferings after the loss of the situation in Tooley Street were great, and I bore them as long as a constitution, delicate from the outset, and now utterly enfeebled, would permit; but poor living, and constant exposure to the weather, at last broke me down, and I came to my wits' end. In this extremity I bethought me of Chelsea Hospital. I applied to be taken as an in-

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pensioner into the house, was desired to provide myself with a character, obtained one from an officer to whom I had been known in India, and was admitted. I hope that I am neither ungrateful for the asylum which is afforded me, nor indisposed to make what amends I can for the errors of my past life. For even this narrative will not be without its uses if it serve to impress the conviction upon young men, that he who becomes the slave of any one vice is sure to be destroyed by it.

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THOMAS STURREY'S STORY.

CHAPTER I.

MY BIRTH AND EDUCATION, AND MY FIRST ACQUAINTANCE WITH THE SERVICE.

My name is Thomas Sturrey. I am the son of a poor but honest man, who worked for his daily bread as a farm-servant, and lived with the same master, faithfully and creditably, a longer period than I can at this moment specify. I was born at Wisbeach in Essex, some time in the year 1774, and went to school at Thaxted for six years and a half. They said, that I was a sharp fellow then, and took to my book kindly. I believe that they were right; for what I learned in boyhood I never afterwards forgot,—a pretty good proof that, be it much or little, it was at least learned accurately.

My father had a fancy that I should be educated to a trade; and as I happened to prefer that of a carpenter to all others, into a carpenter's yard he sent me. I was bound apprentice too, for a sort of indefinite period, that is to say, an agreement was entered into between my master and my father, that I should continue with the former till I was twenty-one, not as an inmate of his house, but doing his work at a fixed rate of weekly wages, and living where I chose. For three years I stuck to the ar-

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rangement; but I could not be persuaded to do more. My master and I differed in opinion as to the value of my earnings; so, by way of settling the dispute, I threatened to leave him. On which he told me, I was a saucy jackanapes, and bade me go to the devil, or anywhere else, if I liked it better. I took him at his word; and, removing to Maulding in Surrey, found employment there with a sawyer, who treated me very well. But I grew tired of Maulding also, and came back to South Minster in Essex, where, for about a fortnight, I lived on my savings, at the sign of the Rose and Crown, along with two or three other youths who, like myself, preferred play to work. We little thought that this vagary of ours, which seemed to us a mere chance-arrangement, was to lead to our taking the most important step which through life we were ever likely to take; yet, that such was the case we soon had reason to know, and you shall know also when I go on with my story.

The war of the French Revolution had arrived, in the year 1794, at its height, and the greatest exertions were made everywhere to enroll young men both for the fleet and the army. All the militias, too, were embodied, and there was a general stir to increase their efficiency. Among other corps, the East Essex was beating up for volunteers; and it so chanced, that while my friends and I were smoking our pipes in the tap of the Rose and Crown, a recruiting party came in. As may be supposed, the conversation turned immediately upon the business in which they were engaged, and the Sergeant spoke in glowing terms of the pleasures of a soldier's life

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Money likewise seemed to be abundant among them; for they ordered their liquor in a tone and with a manner which showed that they were accustomed to jolly living, and had the means of commanding the respect of all publicans. All this was enticing enough to a young man like myself, whose habits, if the truth must be spoken, were not then very industrious; yet, somehow or other, I would not take the bait on the instant. I thought it more dignified to give myself a few airs; and I said that I would not go with them.

"Why so?" was the answer. "Don't you see how merrily we live? Where do you expect to find a better chance?"

"May be nowhere; but I won't go with you."

"Your reason? young fellow; your reason?" demanded the Sergeant. "You seem to address yourself particularly to me. Is there anything about my cut that displeases you?"

"Yes, there is," replied I. "You are a great deal too swarthy for me; the first master I served, told me to go to the devil, and I would not march after a chap of your complexion, lest people should think I had taken his advice."

The sergeant, whose name was Fisher, took the joke very good-humouredly, and many times reminded me of it in after years. But he did not therefore lose sight of his man; he went away almost immediately; and had not been gone half an hour, ere another party from the same regiment made their appearance. At the head of the latter was a sergeant whom nature had blessed with a complexion diametrically the opposite to that of

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Sergeant Fisher. He was a singularly fair man, whose long locks resembled the finest flax after it has been well combed and carded. There was no resisting his entreaties. So I, and one of my companions, took the shilling. Why should I describe the sort of jollification that followed? It seemed to our inexperienced gaze that the wealth of empires was in the keeping of our comrades; and the generosity with which they flung it about, absolutely astonished us. Sergeant Lawrence, for example, whose recruits we now were, lugged silver coins out of his pocket by handfuls; and the quantities of ale and spirits which he encouraged us to swallow, are not to be estimated by ordinary measure; nay, the very privates tossed their shillings and halfcrowns about as if they valued them not; and even we caught the infection. Among other pranks — and they were both numerous and diversified,— we put a crown-piece on the head of the drum, and made the drummer jump over it, very much to his discomfort and our edification, because to the imminent hazard of the King's parchment, for which he was responsible.

We remained at the Rose and Crown till the greater part of our listing money was spent, when we removed to another house to sleep, the people of the Rose not being able to accommodate so many. My companion and I slept in the same bed, though how we got there I confess that I never could make out; for, after a certain hour in the evening, all was a blank to me. But with the early dawn consciousness came back, and I was aware that something or other had carried me beyond the beaten path of

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life. The bed in which we lay faced the window; that is to say, the window faced me, when, lifting my head from the pillow, I looked straight before me, and I saw that a number of stout iron bars rendered ingress or egress through the aperture impossible. The door, again, which stood on my right hand, was locked; in a word, we were prisoners. I rubbed my eyes, so did my companion; when, lo! the mystery received its solution; for, from a couple of nails in the wall our hats were dangling, both of them gaudily decorated with ribbons. In an instant the occurrences of the preceding day rose into our minds, and the conviction that we had fairly enlisted operated upon each in a manner sufficiently illustrative of his temper and disposition. My companion began to cry bitterly. I laughed at his weakness, and told him that a good mug of ale would deliver me from my sorrows, which were all included under one head, namely, that I was suffering terribly from thirst. I had by far the better of the argument; for a rap against the wall brought Sergeant Lawrence to our assistance, who, promptly relieving my distress, joined me in turning into ridicule the profitless, and, sooth to say, uncalled-for tribulation of my comrade.

We were carried that day to Colchester and sworn in, where four or five lads in a similar plight with ourselves, met us. I perfectly recollect, that these youths were somewhat unfairly dealt by; and that, had I not been more determined than they, I should have suffered wrong also. The bounty given for recruits in those days was twelve guineas; and they were promised, over and above, a complete fit-out,

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such as shirts, stockings, shoes, brushes, and, indeed, all the articles which are usually comprehended under the head of a soldier's necessaries. This might, or might not, have been too much; but a bargain is a bargain all the world over, and it is no time to draw back from terms after they have been offered and accepted. Accordingly, when it was proposed to stop two guineas out of my twelve, as a fund for the purchase of a kit, I stoutly objected to the arrangement, and was nowise moved to yield the point because the rest of the greenhorns had yielded it. They accepted each his ten guineas, and afterwards complained that they had been cheated. I refused to take less than twelve, and I got them.

Though we had been sworn in at Colchester, we saw nothing of the regiment itself, till we joined it where, with several others, it lay under canvass, among the heights above Folkstone. It was a magnificent corps, which mustered a thousand bayonets; and was made up of the very pith and sinew of the youth of Essex. Moreover, the sort of life which we led in that peaceable camp proved, at least to me, an exceedingly pleasant one. The tents, quite different in shape from those which were in use with the Peninsular army, contained each twelve men. They were furnished with arm-racks, stools, and hammocks; the last of which, suspended from the sort of scantling which sustained the roof, supplied the place of beds to the inmates. Then, again, our streets were arranged with perfect regularity; we had our cooking-places and sutlers' booths attached; and, except that drill went on with unceasing acti-

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vity, the amount of duty to be performed was very trifling. I confess, therefore, that the wearing away of summer, and the approach of the season which would render a continuance of this out-of-doors existence impossible, was not regarded by me with an eye of approbation; and that, on the third of November, when the order was given to break up, I obeyed it with positive reluctance.

The East Essex were distributed, during the winter of 1794-5 in billets, through Sittingbourne, Faversham, Ospringe, and Milton. Head-quarters were established in the first-mentioned of these places, and things went very smoothly; but the return of spring called us once more into the field, and we again pitched our camp above Hythe. It will be borne in mind that, at the period of which I speak, an invasion from the opposite coast was from day to day expected. The harbours of Boulogne, of Brest, and indeed of the whole of that sea-coast, swarmed with vessels for the transport of an army which covered the heights far and near with its tents, and could, on a clear day, be seen, with the aid of a good telescope, practising manœuvres. Of course there was extreme watchfulness on our part; patrols passed to and fro along the beach continually, and a signal-station was erected on every hill-top; yet the enemy stirred not throughout the whole period of our service there, nor once were we required to be at our rallying posts. But we did not play thus at soldiers even throughout the summer. Early in May, we received our route for the Isle of Wight, which we reached in due time, without the occurrence of any casualty; and there, in the town of Newport, we

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spent six-and-thirty weeks, not a little to our own satisfaction.

I do not recollect that there befell, in all that space of time, a single event of which it would be worth while to take notice. The island, indeed, was a scene of continual bustle; for a large fleet lay then in the roads; and many regiments went and came, not a little to the benefit of publicans and shopkeepers. Among others, there was a battalion of French emigrants quartered there, the appearance of which interested us much; and whose ultimate fate was, as I need hardly stop to record, a sad one. As far as my memory serves, the battalion in question mustered about three hundred men. An orderly and well-disciplined set of fellows they appeared to be, and their behaviour was in every particular correct; but it was their dress and style of doing duty that, more than other points in their bearing, distinguished them as well from ourselves as from other regiments in the garrison. They wore green jackets, with scarlet facings, each jacket being lined with fur; and it was their practice when on sentry or otherwise exposed to the night air, to turn their jackets inside out. Poor fellows! we made slender acquaintance with them, because they did not understand one word of our language, nor we one word of theirs; but we could not but be sensible of a pang of genuine commiseration when the results of the expedition to Quiberon Bay, to them so fatal, to our own arms so little creditable, came, only a few months afterwards, to be communicated to us.

We remained in the Isle of Wight till the spring of 1796, when we crossed the narrow channel that

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divides it from the main, and took up our quarters at a town, of which I have forgotten the name, in Hampshire. From thence we proceeded to Exeter, where we continued a full twelvemonth; and where, for aught I know to the contrary, we might have remained much longer, but for the alarm of a threatened invasion in Wales. Three French frigates, it appeared, had anchored somewhere on that coast, and put on shore a considerable body of troops; and we, in common with other regiments nearest at hand, were commanded to concentrate with all possible speed, for the purpose of opposing them. It was late in the afternoon when the order reached us; yet the same evening ball-cartridges were issued out, and by five on the following morning we were in rapid movement towards the scene of action.

The first day's march carried us to Chumleigh, the second to Barnstable, and the third to Launceston, our unexpected arrival in which created no little stir among the inhabitants. It was on a Sunday that we entered the town, when the shops were all closed, the streets deserted, and the people assembled at Divine worship — a holy exercise, on which the crash of our drums broke in with an effect which both surprised and alarmed; for the minds of men were filled throughout the kingdom with anticipations of war brought home to their own doors; and every rumour of military movements that went by a hair's breadth beyond the customary routine, was sure to create a belief that these anticipations were about to be realised. Accordingly, when the commanding officer, after halting just outside the town, that the column might close, and the men rest for a minute, ere get-

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ting into their places, directed the band to strike up, and the drums added their sharp rattle to the music of clarionet and French horn, the effect produced upon the pious people of Launceston was wonderful. Forth poured the throng from the house of God, with consternation on every countenance, which the sight even of British uniforms, and British flags unfurled, hardly sufficed for a while to disperse; but when at length they became assured that we were neither Frenchmen nor enemies, their kinder feelings soon began to display themselves in a very unequivocal manner. We had no need to inquire minutely after our billets in Launceston. The inhabitants carried us to their homes, as if we had been relatives from whom they had long been separated; and the remainder of the day was spent in a manner which no class of persons know better how to appreciate than soldiers on the march.

We never got further than Launceston in our progress towards Wales. The enemy's ships, it appeared, after landing about 1200 men, had, for some reason which has never been satisfactorily explained, quitted the coast; and the troops, finding themselves deserted by their countrymen, made no attempt at a military movement. They kept together with arms in their hands, till a respectable force of militia and volunteers came to arrest them; and then, without firing a shot, surrendered. Of course there was no further occasion to pour troops into the principality; and we, and other corps which were marching from various quarters on the same point, all received instructions to halt. We did so for one week in Launceston, and for the remainder of the season in the

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borough of Liscard and the small towns and villages near. For myself, I was quartered during the winter of 1796, with the staff and band of the corps, at Loo; but my memory retains no impression of any event which gave to that portion of my career a marked interest; and I therefore conclude that the winter passed on without any such event having befallen.

The case is different when I come to speak of the occurrences of 1797—a year of no ordinary anxiety to Englishmen in general, and to me, and to others who led the same sort of life, productive of a good deal of excitement.

It was much the practice, at the period of which I speak, to encamp a large portion of the army during the summer months, partly because it was judged expedient to inure the men to the habits which a camp engenders, and partly because the troops were considered more disposable for purposes of defence against invasion, while kept together in brigades and divisions, with all their equipment at hand, than if separated, as must necessarily be the case in quarters, into single battalions, and even companies. Agreeably to this practice, the spring of 1797 no sooner fairly set in, than we were directed to take the field, and to march to the high grounds which overlook Lord Mount Edgecombe's demesne, where a large encampment was formed.

Our position was an exceedingly interesting one; for it immediately confronted Plymouth, and gave us a commanding view of the harbour then swarming with vessels, and of the channel far and near. Moreover, there were other sources of interest besides

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these, of which, when we first took possession of our ground, we were ignorant. A spirit of disaffection then prevailed among the crews of the men-of-war; and it was our business to take care that the mutineers should not succeed in doing any serious damage to the town or the dockyard. I do not know that the seamen ever meditated any atrocity of the sort. I believe, on the contrary, that their sole object was to obtain a redress of certain grievances which pressed them sore; indeed, the behaviour of the Portsmouth squadron, so soon as their wishes were complied with, proves that, by the great mass at least, justice, and not power, was aimed at. But there are turbulent spirits in every crowd, which love discord for the sake of the evils which it produces; and seeking only their own aggrandisement, care little for the amount of misery, which, in the furtherance of their ends, they may bring upon others. Some such there were among both the seamen and marines who manned the fleet and occupied the citadel of Plymouth. And of the results to which the machinations of a portion of them led, I am now going to give an account.

There had been a good deal of talk about a conspiracy in the citadel; and a general court-martial was known to have sat some time; but of the true merits of the case we were in profound ignorance; when, one afternoon, there appeared in the Orderly Book, a memorandum to this effect:—"The East Essex regiment will parade to-morrow morning at seven o'clock, in light marching order, with forty rounds of ball-cartridge in each man's pouch, in order to witness the carrying into execution of the

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sentence of a general court-martial." It is not a pleasant thing to lie down at night with the conviction on your mind that next day you will be required to be present when one or more of your fellow-creatures are put to death. Far be it from me to question either the necessity of investing those in authority with this power, or the wisdom, indeed the humanity, when serious causes arise, of exercising it. I know, on the contrary, that without discipline bodies of armed men become worse than useless to the country, and that there is no carrying on discipline except with the strong hand, tempered, no doubt, and restrained continually by kindness as a general rule of action. But, in spite of this persuasion, even if there accompanied it an assurance that the particular parties about to suffer have richly deserved their fate, he must be a strangely constituted being who can look forward with indifference to such a drama as that in which, on the morrow, we knew that we should be actors. We did not murmur or complain; we were too much alive to our own duty, and too well prepared to discharge it, to think of such behaviour as that; but we became conscious of a pressure on the spirit which affected each of us very painfully; and the sports and gambols which used on ordinary occasions to close in the day, were intermitted. Tattoo found most of us in our hammocks; and within an hour after the drums had ceased to beat, every light in the camp, except those beside the guard tent, and about the officers' quarters, was extinguished.

My sleep that night was broken; and the dreams which accompanied it were both vivid and uneasy.

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I cannot therefore say, that even the consideration of what a few hours must necessarily bring about, caused me to watch the gradual approach of daylight with regret. It seems to me, likewise, that the same temper prevailed among the party with whom I was associated in the tent; for we all leaped from our hammocks at the first note of the réveille, as if they had failed that night of bringing to us the refreshment, of which they were usually the organs. But, though prompt enough to quit our beds, and exceedingly on the alert in getting ready for parade, there was not much of the gaiety in our bearing which on common occasions characterised it. The detestable system of powdering, and frizzing, and clubbing the hair, was then in operation; and our clothes were made to fit so closely to the shape that to get them on and off, without suffering a fracture, required at least as much of ingenuity as of patience. All this, though it called forth many a growl, was at other seasons a fruitful source of merriment also; for, the contortions of countenance which one after another we exhibited, as one by one we submitted to have our locks dragged into all manner of unnatural positions, would have tested the gravity of graver men than we; while the despairing efforts, especially of recruits, to insinuate themselves into integuments, which by no common exertions could be drawn on, or when drawn on, be brought to unite,— I doubt whether the dullest of mere martinets could have witnessed these without laughter. But to-day they produced upon us no effect whatever; we dressed, accoutred, gave the last polish to our muskets, and repaired, at the tap

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of the drum, to our respective private parades, without one joke, practical or otherwise, having passed among us, or any allusion having been made, strange as it may appear, to the solemn business in which we were going to become actors.

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CHAPTER II.

A MILITARY EXECUTION; WITH DETAILS OF ANOTHER KIND.

In the camp on Edgecombe Heights there were four regiments of infantry; all of them, if I recollect right, militia regiments, and each a thousand strong. Some artillery lay near us, but with an interval between their tents and ours, while a detachment of cavalry occupied the village beneath the hill, sufficient to furnish the necessary patrols and orderlies, and no more. The whole of this force got under arms about half past six, on a bright summer's morning; and marched down to a plain, not far from Kingston, and within view of Drake's Island, in the harbour. We found when we reached the place of assembly, that not for us exclusively had the painful duty been reserved; all the disposable strength of Plymouth garrison was there, including a division of Marines, which could not muster less than twelve hundred men; and there was a striking peculiarity in the equipment of these latter. They were all, with the exception of two detachments, one of forty, the other of sixty men, unarmed. The officers, to be sure, wore their swords; but neither sergeants nor privates carried either musket or bayo-

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net; and their very accoutrements had been left behind. There was something calculated at once to humble and to alarm, in such a spectacle. It seemed to imply that of the fidelity of the entire division doubts were entertained; and whether these were, or were not well founded, the disgrace put upon the corps was palpable. Happily for themselves, the Marines have found frequent opportunities since of proving that their good faith is like their courage, equal to that of any other portion of England's armed force; but in 1797 this important truth was doubted; and the events of this day, as well as the transactions out of which they sprang, had no tendency to create a different assurance.

I do not believe that there were fewer than four or five thousand men in the plain that day, including, of course, the division of unarmed marines, the general and staff, and a squadron of horse artillery. We were formed along three sides of a square; the fourth side, which looked towards the sea, being open; that is to say, it presented to our gaze only three graves, with three coffins, which lay side by side, upon the mound of earth that had been cast up from the centre one. Our division, with some regiments of the line that were brought I know not whence, occupied parallel fronts of the square. The marines were placed so as immediately to face the graves, of which we were in some sort on the flank. In front of the unarmed mass, again, were two or three parties of armed men, all marines,

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in this order. Forty stood with ordered arms, about fifteen yards apart from the coffins; and on their right flank, though a pace or two removed from them, was a single sergeant, carrying a fusee. He wore neither pouch nor side-arms, nor belts, but seemed to be equipped in every respect like one from whom some sudden display of activity was to be expected. About fifteen yards to the rear of these forty stood sixty more, all, like the foremost detachment, armed, and all marines. Next came two field-pieces; which the artillery-men loaded in our sight with grape; and beside which they kept post, with lighted fusees in their hands. While, last of all, was a troop of horse, mounted, with swords drawn, and ready, as it seemed, on a given signal, to bear down the first movement towards mutiny. Moreover, I observed, that as a single sergeant flanked the more advanced of the armed parties, so he in his turn was supported by other sergeants, two standing on a level with the flank of the second line; and six more succeeding them. The whole of these, be it observed, were equipped like the first, each having merely his fusee, while all were disencumbered of everything which might affect the rapidity of their movements.

The purpose for which they were so placed puzzled us of course a good deal, when we first beheld them; but the event proved that the disposition was a wise one. We had been upon the ground perhaps half an hour, when the shrill notes of the fife, and

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the low roll of muffled drums, caused us to turn our eyes in the direction of the citadel. There, winding slowly down the road, we beheld an armed party on the march, in the midst of which moved three marines, with their wrists manacled together. The culprits, for such they were, appeared to be men in the very prime and vigour of their days; tall stout fellows, with no palpable mark of the traitor about them; and their countenances, though pale, exhibited, as they approached our ranks, few traces of despondency, or even unmanly terror. Their dress was, of course, the ordinary fatigue dress of their corps, and on their heads were foraging caps; but they appeared to have taken considerable pains with themselves, for it was impossible for men to be more clean, or to carry about them an air more decidedly professional.

They were conducted towards the coffins, where a corporal struck off their irons; and the guard falling back, left them to hold converse with a priest, who had accompanied them from their cells. It was a long, and apparently, an interesting one; while the mode in which it was carried on affected us greatly. Two out of the three soon knelt down upon their coffins, as if their confessions were made, and their souls shrived. The third continued for some time in an erect position, the priest's hand being all the while clasped in his. Poor fellow! — there was a surmise prevalent in the camp to the last, that he protested his innocence of the crime with which

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he had been charged, and that his conference with the priest had for its object the vindication of his character after his fate should have been sealed. I cannot tell how much of truth was in the rumour; nor is it for me to cast the shadow of reproach on the finding and sentence of the court which tried him: but I perfectly recollect that the interval of his conversation with the clergyman, was to all of us exceedingly distressing; and that, though it could not have lasted more than five minutes at the utmost, we began by degrees to fear that it would never terminate. At last, however, the General's impatience broke forth into words. I believe that he was quite as much affected as any of us. Who, indeed, can be otherwise than affected while watching the conduct of a fellow-creature who, in perfect health, is preparing for immediate death. But he felt, I presume, that it was his duty to shorten this trying scene as much as possible. Accordingly, he called aloud to the priest to withdraw, and threatened, in case he did not attend to this warning, that the party should fire upon him also. The priest had fulfilled his part as became him; and having once more pressed the culprit's hand, and committed him to God's keeping, he retired behind our lines. Then knelt the unhappy man down in his place, with a cheek that blenched not, and an eye that never lost its brightness; and the signal being given, the forty marines who composed the execution party came to the "present," and fired. There was

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something more than commonly startling in the result. The companions of the object of our intense interest dropped on the instant; they never moved a limb, but died upon the spot. He who seemed so reluctant to part with life, escaped without a wound; yet he rose not from his kneeling position, nor was a moment granted him for rising. The sergeant, who stood alone on the flank of the party, saw that their volley had failed; and, in obedience to the instructions which placed him where he was, he hastened to atone for the failure. He sprang towards the condemned man, clapped the muzzle of the fusee to his head, and in an instant he was a corpse.

The wretched men who thus brought their days to an untimely end, had been implicated in a plot for the destruction, not only of the barracks of their division, but of every man, woman, and child that dwelt within the walls. It was the design of the conspirators to set fire to one of the powder-magazines, which stood at no great distance from that portion of the citadel which they occupied; and the diabolical scheme had been brought near to its accomplishment, ere one of their confederates lost heart, and revealed the whole matter to the officer commanding. All this I believe is historically true; but to the tales that went along with it — to the whispers which tended to implicate men of rank and station, and respectability, in the plot, there was, in the camp, no end. I never heard that they were in any instance brought home to individuals, and even

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among us they gradually ceased to create an interest.

A military execution is invariably followed by a march of the troops who may have witnessed it, in review order, past the spot where the bodies of the culprits lie. We did not intermit this practice on the present occasion; but, wheeling back into columns of companies, we executed the manœuvre so that each company, as it approached the graves, broke, at the word of command, into single files. I am not quite convinced that any good arises from thus compelling each individual to familiarise himself with the image of death in its most revolting form. The effect, when the discharge takes place, and the condemned men fall, is electrical. You hold your breath while the preliminary words are given, and when all is over, the heart ceases for an instant to beat; but when you are told to look deliberately on these relics of humanity, I suspect that the uppermost feeling is one of mingled loathing and compassion. At all events, I am very sure that, for the remainder of that day, we talked a great deal more of the gallant conduct of the men who died, than of the crime for which they suffered. I am not sure but that the punishment of death operates best as an example and a warning, when there is thrown over it a veil of mystery, which none but the executioner is permitted to raise.

We returned to the camp full, as may be imagined, of the harrowing little drama in which we had

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been actors; and, as if it had been intended to hinder the excitement from dying too suddenly away, we then heard that, on the morrow, further executions were to take place. There was not, however, any compulsion upon us to witness these executions, even from a distance; for the men appointed to die were sailors, and they were to be hung at the yard-arm of one of the ships in harbour. Yet I know not whence it comes about, people seem to be, in such cases, under the influence of a spell, which they utterly repudiate, but against which they find it impossible to struggle. From the brow of the hill, along which our tents were pitched, we could command a full view of the scene of action; and I suspect that there were very few among us who omitted to take advantage of his position. But why should I speak more of such matters? Those seamen, to whom the charge of mutiny had been brought home, having been tried by a general court-martial, and found guilty, were led forth, at eight o'clock in the morning, to suffer; and they died, as sailors similarly circumstanced always do, by a process which, however clumsy in appearance, is said to be expeditious, and therefore merciful. It was not so with a convicted partner in their crime, whom the court sentenced only to be flogged round the fleet; and when we beheld him tied to a gun, in the bow of a man-of-war's launch, and then rowed from ship to ship, that beneath each he might receive a portion of his punishment, I must, in all candour, declare that it was a

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horrid sight, the remembrance of which is not such as tempts me to linger over it in recital longer than may be absolutely necessary to make a record of the fact.

We remained in and around Plymouth during the summer months in camp, being provided throughout the winter with more substantial quarters, till 1799, when the regiment marched to Ipswich, in Suffolk, and there took possession of the barracks. To me this move was pregnant with serious and important consequences. We had previously been informed of the passing of the Act of Parliament, which encouraged men to volunteer from the militia into the regular army, and among ourselves a good deal of discussion had taken place, as to the wisdom of acting upon it; but not till we reached Ipswich were such temptations thrown in my way, as induced me seriously to think of yielding to them. In the beginning of November, however, there came among us a sergeant from the Coldstream Guards, whose description of the advantages enjoyed by his corps was clothed in that species of eloquence which I found it impossible to resist. I made a tender of my services in so distinguished a regiment, and was immediately accepted. Nor, to say the truth, had my friend greatly overrated the value of the privileges which, in those days, a soldier of the Guards possessed above all others. So long, indeed, as the Coldstream did duty in camp or country quarters, it fared with us, pretty much as with the rank and file

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of other regiments; and during the first two years in which I had the honour of belonging to it, we rarely passed except from one country quarter to another. Thus, throughout the summer of 1800, we were under canvass near Windsor, whence we moved in succession to Colchester, Chelmsford, Chatham, and Windsor again. But this state of things could not last for ever: in 1802 we found ourselves, to our exceeding joy, doing duty over the palace of St. James's, and mounting guard at the Horse Guards; nor from that period, up to our embarkation in 1809, were we, for many months at a time, absent from the metropolis.

When I speak of a march into London as having been, at that period, a matter of congratulation among the Guards, I must be cautious, lest the inference should, by great mischance, be drawn that, either then or now, the duties of the capital bore less severely upon the troops than the duties of an outstation. The very reverse is the fact. I have had as much experience in such matters as most men, and I can testify that there is no town or fortress within the limits of the four seas, of which the duties take so much out of the men as London. In the first place, there is in London a much greater number of ordinary guards, even in proportion to the strength of the garrison, than any where else throughout the kingdom; in the next place, the demands for extra guards are unceasing; and, as each of the great theatres, the Opera-house being in-

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cluded among them, requires one, the exposure to night air becomes more frequent in exact proportion as the seasons become inclement. Then the sentries in London are multitudinous to a degree: there never occurs a riot, nor the threatening of a riot, which brings not the entire brigade under arms; and reviews, field-days, drills, and inspections, are unceasing. Let me not, therefore, be understood as representing the military situation of the household troops as a sinecure; yet there were advantages of a different kind attending this sort of duty in London, which led them, very naturally, to regard it as a thing greatly to be desired. So soon as the early parade of each day came to an end, leave was given to all such of the men as might not be wanted for duty, to go and work. Now, when it is borne in mind that labour was then abundant, and labourers few; that mere bodily strength sufficed to earn good wages for such as would expend it; and skill, however moderate, in any handicraft could command a remuneration which is now beyond the reach of the most adroit; the real cause of our rejoicing when the route for London reached us need not be a subject of puzzle to the most obtuse-minded. For myself, I declare that my acquaintance with the sawyer's business stood me in the stead of a little fortune. I have repeatedly earned by it as much as two pounds in a week, and have more than once bribed a comrade with seven shillings, to take my guard, so that I might not be interrupted in a job.

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Such were the advantages which, till the peace, and, indeed, till four years after it, the Guards undeniably possessed over the regiments of the line. The men had opportunities of making themselves known to artificers, and persons who stood in need of workmen, about town; and, as they had a double motive for conducting themselves properly while employed, they were, for the most part, decided favourites with their employers. Yet even when this state of things prevailed, London, with its innumerable temptations, and the facilities which it gave to crime, proved a wretched nursery as well to the moral as to the physical health of such as frequented it. I believe, indeed, that the experience of Chelsea Hospital can testify, that from the Guards more men die young of exhaustion or pulmonary complaints, or of diseases brought on by exposure or vicious habits, than from almost all the rest of the army put together — I mean from that portion of the army which is employed in doing the duty of all the garrison towns of England and Scotland; and if this be the case now, much more must the rule have held good at a time when a Guardsman would have been accounted poor indeed, who could not afford to pay four or five shillings at the least, for the purpose of screening himself from any piece of military duty which threatened to interfere with his civil avocation, or even with his personal amusement.

I am not sure that I should add much either to

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my own reputation, or the edification of others, if I were to dwell at length upon that period in my military career which is comprised between the autumn of 1802 and the spring of 1809: it was spent chiefly in the capital, with an occasional sojourn at Windsor or Chatham, or some other of the Guards' stations; and it passed from me as time is apt to do from him who has not learned to value it as he ought. Of money I could always command as much as my necessities, real or imaginary, required; and, with the thoughtlessness of my age and profession, I never dreamed of saving, against the day when it would be otherwise. My health, likewise, continued good; and I may venture, without boasting, to add that I did my duty as became me — a circumstance which earned for me the good opinion of my superiors, and lost me no favour among my comrades. But of other matters why should I speak? from the follies into which those about me ran, I was not restrained; and if I escaped still darker and more fatal errors, I have to thank the Power who watched over me much more than my own prudence.

But I must not get into a strain of moralising where, in good sooth, it would be out of place; let me rather turn, as it were, to a new leaf in the book of my own history, and show how it fared with me amid scenes at once more perilous and more stirring than any which I have yet described.

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CHAPTER III.

CADIZ.—THE BATTLE OF BAROSSA.

The first battalion of the Coldstream Guards had, almost since the commencement of the struggle, been employed in the Peninsula, first under Sir John Moore, and afterwards with Sir Arthur Wellesley. In the beginning of 1810, it was determined by those in power to send out a separate expedition, under the command of General Graham, which should assist the Spaniards in the defence of Cadiz, and otherwise contribute, as far as might be, to the ultimate success of the war. The battalion to which I was attached, received orders early in March to form part of that expedition; and, after a brief delay, marched to Greenwich, where we were put on board ship. We were not very numerous — I think that we could scarcely muster six hundred bayonets, while a large majority of us were either mere lads, or men who had seen the best of their days; yet we embarked as British soldiers always do, in the highest possible spirits, and gave three hearty cheers when the transports slipt from their moorings. There was a prodigious crowd of people on the river's banks, by whom our cheers were cordially returned; and so, amid the waving of hats and handkerchiefs, the

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booming of our band, a clamour of human voices, which would have drowned even the noise of artillery, and a few natural tears, we bade adieu to our native land, many of us for ever.

Our voyage was agreeable enough, that is to say, we encountered no storms, and had nothing to complain of in the shape of privations, except that in point of room we were grievously straightened. To that, however, our minds were made up; and, as the vessels held their way with breezes for the most part not unfavourable, we counted, not without reason, on bringing the grievance, such as it was, to a speedy termination. But there was no steam in fashion then, and convoys are proverbial for their tedious rate of moving, so that April came ere we obtained our first glance of the coast towards which our course was directed. At last, however, Cape St. Vincent, with its bold bluff and sharp promontory, rose, like a fortress out of the waters; and, wind and tide being alike in our favour, was soon left behind. Then stretched we across the noble gulf into which fall the waters of the Guadiana and the Guadalquiver, till by and by the Bay of Cadiz itself opened upon us, and we steered towards it. From their batteries at Santa Maria, as well as from Porto Real and Checalino, the French fired upon us as we passed, but we sustained no injury from the shot; and on the morning of Sunday, the 6th of April, the ships having drawn close to the quay, we landed amid the hearty vivas of the inhabitants.

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At the period of which I now speak, Cadiz was closely invested by Marshal Victor. His lines, which extended from sea to sea, covered a semicircle of at least five-and-twenty English miles, and embraced all the redoubts which girdle in and cover the city from Santa Maria on the right, to a fortified post of which I have forgotten the name, opposite to the Isle of Leon, on the left. Of the number of his troops I cannot speak accurately; though, judging from the display which they made, I should say that it was very great; and their activity and zeal, as well in working as in firing, was indefatigable. In many instances, indeed, their ammunition was utterly wasted, for the shot fell short, and even shells barely reached the town; yet they did not appear to take much heed of these failures, but continued the practice unremittingly. On the part of the Spaniards, again, I am bound to state that the very best spirit seemed to prevail among them. Arms, indeed, nobody except the regular garrison carried; but the citizens contributed clothes and necessaries for the troops; and the women, as is invariably the case wherever the spirit of a nation is good, considered no sacrifices too great in the cause of their country and its independence. I am not quite sure that the temper which prevailed among the members of Government and other heads of departments, was quite so praiseworthy. We had been but a short time at our post, ere whispers began to circulate of a jealousy having arisen between

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the Spanish authorities and General Graham; and I think that the behaviour of the latter on an occasion to which I shall presently refer, goes far to prove that they were not absolutely groundless.

The British troops were not permitted to take up their quarters in the city itself, neither did they join the Spanish garrison in any of the duties of the place; they removed, on the contrary, in a body, to the Isle of Leon, a large town in the island of the same name, of which they kept possession during a space of ten months. Not, however, in idleness, far less in tranquillity, was this extended period passed: there were working-parties sent out every day, some of which found employment in throwing up batteries, others in repairing the fortifications which already existed, while the remainder busied themselves in the dockyard, of which the wealth, when we first entered it, seemed to be immense. The magazine of blocks, ropes, sails and other gear necessary for the equipment of a fleet, was crammed to the very ceiling. The quantities of masts and spars likewise, of timber in the log, and trees not yet stripped of their bark, were prodigious; while copper and iron bolts seemed, to my unpractised eyes, to set all attempts at measurement, far more reckoning, at defiance. Yet it was marvellous to behold how, under our ruthless hands, these heaps of national wealth melted away. The trees, logs, masts, and spars were all cut up into planks; and used by the engineers as platforms, ladders, or materials for

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the construction of bridges; the sails, ropes, blocks, and such like, all went on board of the British fleet; nay, the very brass ordnance, with which the ramparts of Cadiz were exclusively armed, gave place to cast-iron guns, and disappeared. Let me not, however, be understood as insinuating that the slightest wrong was put by their allies on the Spanish nation: the brass guns, for example, only went in exchange for a species of artillery which was far more enduring; the naval stores may have been accepted in part payment of the loans which England made to Spain; and the application of the timber to such uses as those just specified was, under the existing state of affairs, unavoidable. Whatever our faults may be, the nations which have entered with us into treaties of mutual support, cannot charge us with any undue regard to our own pecuniary interests; for poor John Bull has always been proverbially a spendthrift of his gold, for which he is apt to demand only that species of security which is, of all others, the least available, namely, the honour and fidelity of the powers which he subsidises.

My acquaintance with the sawyer's and carpenter's business availed me, at the Isle of Leon, almost as much as it had done in London. I was employed in the dockyard at piece-work, by which means I was able to earn not less than from half a dollar to a dollar per day. It is true that we worked under the fire of the enemy's cannon, which day and night plied us with red hot shot; yet we soon got accustomed to their

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music, and the more readily that the mischief occasioned both to life and property was very trifling. During the whole of our sojourn in the Isle of Leon, I do not think that we lost three men by the cannonade; and if from time to time a bundle of chips or a pile of canvass caught fire, the flames were invariably extinguished ere they spread beyond the portion ignited.

While the artificers belonging to the little army were thus occupied, our comrades busied themselves in covering with embankments the entire face of that neck of land which interposes itself between Cadiz and Leon. Upwards of a hundred pieces of cannon were placed in position along that line; while around the island itself battery after battery sprang up, till it might well nigh be pronounced impregnable to any ordinary means of attack. Moreover, that the risk of surprise might be effectually guarded against, things like harrows — that is to say, strong, heavy wooden frames, set full of iron spikes, sharp and long, and carrying their points uppermost, were laid along the bottom of the sea at low-water mark! while row-boats ceased not, from sunset till clear dawn, to ply backwards and forwards, between us and the enemy's posts. Yet were we not without the means of passing beyond the estuary at our pleasure, and of receiving such supplies as the country-people might find it convenient or practicable to bring in. Across the river, on the Checalino road, there was a bridge of which we kept possession, but of

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which the centre arch had been broken down. This we reunited by means of planks, which were so constructed as to be capable of conveying either footmen or carriages across, but which the slightest exertion of strength, even the arm of an individual, could unship, and drag at pleasure clear of the ruined arch.

Meanwhile, the situation and employments of individuals differed but little from those with which all who have done duty in a beleagured town are familiar. We found quarters, some in one place, some in another, — I and my comrades occupying a large convent, where we were perfectly safe from molestation by the enemy, inasmuch as neither cannon nor mortar could reach us. We took our turns, likewise of main-guard, quarter-guard, and piquet: we patrolled from time to time across the isthmus, and disposed our sentries so as to keep the bank of the river secure. But we had no encounter with the besiegers: they never hazarded an attack — we had no object to gain by a sortie; and thus on both sides the only acts of hostility committed were those of which the gunners were the perpetrators. But it was not our destiny to lead this sort of half-peaceable half-warlike life for ever: towards the end of the year, both General Graham and the Spanish officers expressed themselves heartily tired of a state of inaction, and eager to get rid of the blockade; and early in the spring of 1811, a movement to accomplish the latter object was determined upon.

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I think it was the 21st of February when the Guards, — ourselves and the Third, both very weak, and for that purpose united into one, with a battalion of the First Regiment,—embarked on board of two or three men-of-war, and sailed, as was given out, for Gibraltar. We did not, however, pass beyond the neutral ground; for there the vessels put us ashore at Algesiras; and, leaving us with three days' provisions cooked and stowed away in our haversacks, proceeded on their voyage. As we were in high glee at the prospect of opening a campaign in real earnest, so the departure of our maritime comrades in no respect distressed us. We formed on the beach right in front, marched a little way towards the interior, passed through the suburb which is called Little Gibraltar; and, winning a range of heights just as the dusk closed in, lighted our fires, and made dispositions for a bivouac.

It would be idle in me to give, at this time of day, any description of a scene which is now familiar to the imaginations of all the world. We piled our arms according to recognised usages, established a guard or in line piquet, threw out sentinels to protect the camp against surprise, and took off our knapsacks; then, after consuming a larger portion of our prog than after the experience of a campaign or two we would have been tempted at one meal, and that the first, to send the way of all eatables, we drank our grog, smoked our pipes, and lay down. There are not many situations in which a

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man's sleep comes over him more sweetly than by the side of a bivouac fire; and I can answer for myself, that mine proved to be that night both sound and refreshing.

We were roused in the morning long before dawn; and buckling on our knapsacks, stood in our ranks equipped and ready for moving. But no immediate movement took place: other regiments which were to join us from Gibraltar had not yet come up; and guides to conduct us through the wild woodland country which lies between Gibraltar and Tarifa were wanting. But the delay was not of long continuance: scarcely had our morning parade been dismissed when the expected reinforcements made their appearance; and a dozen mountaineers having likewise offered their services, the advance began.

Without presuming in any degree to trench upon the province of the historian, I must be permitted, at this stage in my narrative, shortly to explain the object which our chiefs had in view, as well as to enumerate the means at their disposal for its accomplishment. As I have already hinted, then, the object of the expedition was to re-open the communication between Leon and the main land; to harass Victor in the extensive lines which he inadequately occupied; and finally, should success attend our efforts to a certain point, to force him into an abandonment of the siege. With this view, there sailed from Leon and

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from Cadiz such a number of British troops as, when joined to the reinforcements from Gibraltar, made up a division of five thousand men. All these, be it observed, were not Englishmen; for a good many of the German legion served with us, and we had a battalion or two of Portuguese, which, because they received British pay, took rank as British soldiers. But Germans and Portuguese were both excellent in their way; and their numbers, when counted with ours, carried us up, as has been stated, to little, if at all, short of five thousand men.

To co-operate with us in this endeavour seven thousand Spaniards embarked at the same time, under the immediate command of their own general, Don Manuel de Lapina. I believe that he was accounted among them a good officer; I am sure that he was at least a cautious one; and I know that, ere the expedition came to an end, we very much lamented that he had not stayed at home; for, either because he was senior in rank to General Graham, or that Spanish pride would not yet submit to British guidance, to him the chief command of the combined forces was intrusted; and, as the sequel will prove, he took exceedingly good care that on our portion of it only the burthen of fighting should devolve.

I believe that the original intention was to land all, British, Portuguese, and Spaniards, at the same point: adverse winds, however, came in the way, so that, while we took the shore at Algesiras, the Spaniards made for Tarifa; and, for a brief space, we

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were without the means of communicating with one another. But our first movement, of which I have already spoken, restored them; and the guns and carriages being all brought round by water, on the 27th the little army may be said to have concentrated itself. Then followed a distribution of the whole into commands, by which means about a thousand Spaniards were added to us, of whom, strange to say, one battalion was dressed in red, and behaved itself, when the hour of trial came, very gallantly.

I return now to my own personal story; for of the exact time and manner in which a second division of Spaniards from St. Roque joined us, it is not within my province to speak. Let me be content to say, that the first day's march from Tarifa was both tedious and slow; that we were obliged literally to cut a road for the artillery through the wood; and that we halted at dusk in an open plain, not having accomplished more than six miles of way, though we had been struggling to get forward from day-dawn. There we were desired to lie down, so soon as we should have lighted fires, and made ourselves comfortable. But our first sleep was yet young, when a sudden order passed from rank to rank to be stirring. We stood to our arms immediately; and by eleven o'clock the same night, recommenced our march. I am sure that I cannot tell whither it carried us. My impression at the moment was, that we were going straight on, and across a country; for road there was none, and

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hedges and ditches, as they came successively in the way, were either scrambled through or surmounted. But even they were found, by and by, not to be the sole obstacles that opposed our progress.

The day had begun to dawn when we found ourselves on the brink of a wide sheet of water, which at the time we mistook for a river, but which we afterwards ascertained to be the Lake of Janda. The Spaniards who led the advance, were all across, but of that circumstance we were ignorant; and even the General, either because he desired to set us a good example, or that he really did not know the exact situation of the ford, made as if he were in doubt how to proceed. He caused the halt to be sounded, while he himself, attended by his staff and orderlies, rode the water, and ascertained its depth. Nor was this all: having gained the opposite shore, the officers to a man dismounted; and, leaving their horses in charge of a few dragoons, came again across the ford on foot. Acts like this, on the part of men high in command, are as wise as they are disinterested. We cheerfully unslung our pouches when such leaders required it; and fastening them on our shoulders, walked breast-high through the water, not only without a murmur, but in the midst of a whole burst of joking and good humour.

I believe that the object of this long and toilsome march was to gain possession of the town of Vegar de la Fontena; and if I am right in this supposition, the plan entirely succeeded. Vegar was carried by a sort

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of assault, in which, however, we took no part; for it yielded to the attack of the advanced division, which, as I have already said, consisted entirely of Spaniards. As to our corps, we passed the town and the hill on which it stands in the night; and not a little exhausted with sixteen hours' incessant travel, were too happy when the word was given to halt upon an open plain. Nor was it from fatigue alone that, on this and the succeeding day, we suffered. Our provisions, issued on first landing, were expended; and though meat was to be had, inasmuch as bullocks followed the line of march, we found it impossible to procure either bread or spirits, except in very small quantities. The parties which were sent into the town, each under its own officer, did, indeed, succeed in procuring a scanty supply; and this the General took care to distribute among us with a degree of impartiality which did him honour, and won the confidence of all who served under him.

In this position we remained from about noon on the 3rd, till ten or eleven o'clock on the night of the 4th of March. Fortunately for us the weather was fine, otherwise we must have suffered greatly; for we had no tents, no quarters, no shelter of any sort, except such as we succeeded in fabricating for ourselves out of the men's great coats and blankets. At last, however the word was given to fall in, and once more, amid the darkness of night, an advance was recommenced.

I can say nothing more of the nature of the coun-

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try through which we passed, than that it seemed to be abundantly open; for we encountered neither wood nor fence which threw the smallest impediment in our way, or caused us to retard our pace. But further than this I am unable to speak, till daylight came on, when we found ourselves approaching a range of low hills, which stretch inwards from the sea-shore about two miles, or two miles and a half, and overlook a plain, not very extensive, yet considerably broken and undulating. The plain in question is, moreover, surrounded on the left by the cliffs, which constitute the sea-board, on the right, by the forest of Checalino; and in front, by a pine-wood, beyond which may be seen the height of Bernieja, which interposes between the sea and the Almaiya Creek. Towards the first of these ranges of hills, then, we were approaching, and in due time we took the ascent. The summit was gained with little difficulty: and about eight or nine o'clock, on the morning of the fifth of March, we were ordered to pile arms, and make ourselves comfortable, along the position of Barossa.

Once more I must disclaim all intention of interfering with the legitimate office of the historian. I really cannot say, from my own knowledge, what the design of these movements was; but it has since been stated that General Lapina lost heart at the moment when success was open to him; and that, afraid to attack Medina Sidonia, which the French were in no condition to maintain, he was now

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manœuvring to re-open his communications with the Ida. Be this as it may, there can be no doubt whatever, that the precipitation with which he conducted his march towards the bridge, was exceedingly displeasing both to General Graham and his followers. One column had come up, disordered by its night march, and sorely fatigued in consequence; a brief halt was therefore essential to its efficiency; yet Lapina, with his Spaniards, disdained to consult our convenience, and moved on without so much as informing us of his intention to do so. Neither did his folly or bad faith end here. He made no communication of his designs, either to General Graham or the officer in command at the Ida. He hurried his own advanced guard into action with the French on the shores of the Santi Petri; and if he did succeed in forcing them back, he has to thank rather the gallantry of one of his lieutenants, than the wisdom of his own plans, or his own skill in carrying them into execution.

While this was going on in front, General Graham, with his division, continued to hold the position of Barossa, of the value of which, as commanding the whole scene of Lapina's projected operations, no man with the slightest knowledge of military matters would doubt. It appears, however, that the halt was exceedingly displeasing to the Spaniard; for, by and by, there came up a staff-officer at speed; and on drums beating, we stood to our arms, and soon began to move. Instead, however, of following

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the Spanish division, which had wound round the hill towards the sea, we were directed to penetrate, by columns of battalions, through the wood; while the baggage, committed to the protection of the flank companies of the ninth and eighty-second regiments, under Major Brown, received orders to follow with all convenient speed. I know that, in addition to this, other blunders were committed. I believe that some engagement was entered into, that the Spaniards would take up our ground; and that, like every other bargain to which our allies were a party throughout the war, it came to nothing. But as the particulars have never been communicated to me, I will not speak at random, lest I should do even the Spaniards injustice, however difficult, in such a case, the task might be; I content myself, therefore, with stating that we entered the wood, not having seen any thing of the French, nor expecting to see them; and that, if we counted on coming into collision with them at all, we never dreamed of doing so till we should have crossed the valley that intervened between us and the Bermega hill.

We had traversed the broken plain of which I have elsewhere made mention, and were already entangled in the pine wood, when a mountaineer overtook us with intelligence that the French had suddenly debouched from the forest of Chiclena, and that all was confusion in the rear. By and by came a message from Major Brown, to demand, in that officer's name, instructions; for the enemy, he said,

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were in possession of the heights, and he had slender hope of being able to save the baggage. General Graham's answer was as gallant as it was prompt:—"Major Brown was to accept the battle, and no great while should elapse ere abundant support would arrive." Accordingly, our columns were ordered not to countermarch, but to face to the right about; and to make their way, rear in front, as fast as possible into the plain. Away, then, we went, neither knowing nor caring whether the place which each of us occupied was his right one; but anxious only to find ourselves once more in a situation which would admit of our forming a line, however irregular, and acting, in some sort, like a disciplined body.

Whether or not the officers expected to see the sight which met their gaze the instant we had cleared the wood, I cannot tell; but the vision of a long and well-formed line, occupying the very slope of the hill from which we had ourselves so recently descended, produced among us, of humble stations, extreme surprise. We could not persuade ourselves that it was not composed of Spaniards; and the delusion gathered strength when they permitted one or two of the leading companies to disentangle themselves quietly from the wood, and form up. To be sure they were, if Spaniards, differently dressed and appointed from any with whom we had as yet formed an acquaintance. The regiment which fronted us wore blue coats with scarlet facings, and red fea-

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thers; their muskets were longer than those which came from English foundries; and they bore themselves with an air of self-confidence and regularity to which none of the Spanish corps which were familiar to us had attained. Neither did they give us much leisure to consider from what causes their superiority might have arisen: having waited till he judged that the proper moment for action was come, their commandant gave the word to fire; and they threw in upon us a volley which, being both close and well-directed, did very considerable execution.

There was no longer room for doubt as to the part which it behoved us to play. Each file and section, as it gained the open entry, threw itself as it best could into the line; and the enemy's fire was returned, if with less regularity, with hearty good will, and no trifling effect. We could not give them a volley; but man by man we paid them back the salute, and the gaps in their ranks were soon serious enough. Nor thus only, strange to say, did our fire seem to affect them. While they were standing with shouldered arms, I saw, plainly enough, that their facings were red, like their feathers; by some sleight of hand, they contrived, when the smoke of their own volley cleared away, to exhibit white facings on their coats, very much to our astonishment. I believe that the transformation was effected by a process as simple as it was easy of accomplishment; they had but to turn down their cuffs, and the white

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linings took the place of the scarlet, which thus became hidden. But that the movement could be made under the idea that we would be deceived into a belief that a fresh regiment was before us, seems hardly credible; yet the prisoners whom we took assigned this as their motive for the proceeding, and I have no right to dispute the point with them. I cannot tell how far they considered us likely to be intimidated by the delusion, had it come over us, which it did not; but I do know that the trick availed them nothing. Without stopping to inquire whether it was composed of old or new enemies, we no sooner got the word to charge than we brought our bayonets to the level. Then rose a hearty British cheer; then there was a rush to the front, and away over the hill ran the 8th French regiment, leaving many of its number dead upon the ground, and not a few prisoners in the hands of the Coldstream.

I was not able to join in that charge, though I witnessed it with pride; for, just before the order was given, I received a musket-ball in the shoulder, which quite disabled me. I sat down, therefore, on the ground, to watch the issue; and, in spite of both pain and weakness, cheered with all my might when I saw the French line halt, waver, break, and finally flee over the ridge. I am bound, likewise, in common fairness to state, that there were two Spanish battalions attached to our division — one of Walloon Guards, the other I know not by what appellation

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called—which behaved with extreme gallantry. It so happened that both were dressed in English clothing; and either because the scarlet hue of their jackets inspired them with unusual courage, or that a spirit of honourable emulation urged them not to fall behind their allies, they played their part in this scrambling sort of fight in a manner worthy of the ancient renown of their country.

The victory of Barossa was complete. It cost us twelve hundred men in killed and wounded, among whom were not fewer than fifty officers; but the loss of the French was much more severe, and it included six pieces of cannon, and an eagle. Yet no results worthy of the sacrifice thus made, ensued: General Lapina, who sent neither cavalry nor artillery to support us when engaged, refused, though strongly urged by General Graham, to assume the offensive; Victor was in full retreat towards Chicalano, with an army weakened by its heavy losses, and disorganised by defeat; and there were still 12,000 infantry and 800 cavalry available on our part, for offensive operations; but on these the Spaniard had no heart to enter. General Graham, accordingly, having committed to his Spanish brigade the charge of burying the dead, marched down towards the sea; and the same night we were all carried across a bridge of boats, and once more housed in the Island of Leon.

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CHAPTER IV.

THE LOW COUNTRIES IN 1813.—BERGEN-OP-ZOOM.

I CAN say nothing more from my own observation of the proceedings of the British troops at Cadiz; because I became, from the hour of our arrival in the island, the inmate of an hospital. I heard, however, that they did nothing; and that so bad a feeling arose between the Spanish and the British chiefs, that the latter judged it expedient to quit the place, and seek employment with Lord Wellington. The regiments, likewise, were by and by directed to reinforce the army then at Madrid; and the strongest and healthiest men being told off for this purpose, the remainder were ordered home. My wound not being as yet perfectly cured, I was in the number of those who were appointed to revisit England; and on the 2nd of May, I embarked for that purpose. I cannot say that this was a subject of regret to me: service in the field is, doubtless, very exciting, and, so long as you are neither starved nor over-worked, you enjoy it amazingly; but a severe wound has a wonderful effect in sobering down a man's ardour; and, during the languor of convalescence, visions of home come over you with exceeding freshness. I confess that I went on board ship not only without

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reluctance, but in a frame of mind which partook largely of thankfulness; and that, when the white cliffs of my native country first broke upon my view, there was a moisture in both eyes which, for a brief space at least, rendered the powers of vision feeble.

We were put on shore at Gosport, with a month's pay in our pockets, and desired to make our way individually, and with as little delay as possible, to our respective destinations. Mine was London, where the reserve battalion of the Coldstream did duty; and there, in due time, I joined it. My manner of life returned, as was natural that it should, into its old channel; and for more than a year I acted, as I had formerly done, the twofold part of soldier and tradesman. For there were ties upon me then which, though I have neglected to speak of them in the order of time as they originated, never ceased to exercise a legitimate influence over me. I was both a husband and a father; and the duty which I owed to those whom Providence had committed to my charge, could not be neglected. Indeed, I may mention once for all, that if I never obtained promotion in my regiment, the circumstance is to be attributed entirely to the anxiety which I experienced that my family should not suffer. More than once I was sent for to the orderly-room, and had the corporal's stripes in my offer. But a corporal of the Guards cannot work; he is paraded every day to receive orders; he is obliged to go all over London

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when men are to be warned for duty. Now, I could not afford, with nine children, to sacrifice the wages which, as a sawyer, I was able to earn; and the consequence has been, that I am now a discharged private, with a pension of a shilling; while a comrade, who enlisted on the same day with myself, and had, neither from intelligence nor education, stronger claims than my own, rose to be pay-sergeant of his company, and is now his own master, with a daily allowance of two shillings and three pence.

I am not complaining of this as a grievance: it was my own choice to remain a private, and to follow my trade; and I continued to indulge this humour peaceably and contentedly, till the month of November, 1813. But other and more active employment was then cut out for me. General Graham, after serving as second in command, under Lord Wellington, till the British army crossed the Bidassoa, was appointed to conduct an expedition into the Low Countries; and my battalion of the Coldstream being ordered to form part of his corps, I once more took leave of my wife and children, and went on board ship.

We embarked at Greenwich, as we had done before, in small vessels, and were transferred at the Nore to the Dictator, which landed us, after a favourable passage, at Scheveling, in Holland. I do not know the exact amount of force which made up the sum of our little army, nor can I specify the par-

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ticular regiments of which it was composed; but I can testify to the fact that we disembarked in the best possible spirits, and that our reception by the Hollanders was in every respect gratifying. At the Hague, indeed, whither we marched as soon as our baggage could be got on shore and put in motion, people seemed to vie with one another in their efforts to deal kindly by us; and, as not unfrequently happens under like circumstances, their very excess of hospitality became a snare to us. Not content to meet us outside the town, and to cheer and otherwise salute us all the way to the market-place, the women brought out whole lapfuls of orange cockades, which they insisted upon our mounting; while the men handed round the schnaps till, in my own instance, and in that of many others, we really did not know what we were doing. For two whole days after I took possession of my billet—I was in no plight to attend parade; yet the honest Dutchmen continued to ply us with liquor, for which they would not accept a stiver of payment. It was well for us that there was no enemy near; and that by our own officers this sort of Saturnalia appeared to be connived at; yet had it lasted much longer, I question whether its effects would not have been both to injure our discipline as regiments, and to fill the hospitals.

Fortunately for us, however, this state of things did not continue. On the third day an order was issued, that the baggage should be packed, and the roll called every hour; because, by early dawn on

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the following morning, we were to commence our march towards Brill. The enemy, who were represented as occupying that town in force, might be expected to give us battle; and it was necessary that we should be in a condition to meet them fairly. Accordingly, every disposition to revelry and rout was that evening quelled: we drank no more than our regular allowance; and getting early to bed, were fresh and able for any service at the first tap of the drum on the morrow.

We marched that day to Delft, a place distant about seven English miles from the Hague, where, in order to give time for other corps to join, we halted. The following morning we moved upon Marsleuce, which we entered about noon, and were immediately put into quarters. I mention the circumstance because there befell, at this place, a little adventure which at the moment interested me much, and which I may as well recount, as illustrative of the state of mixed feeling, and even ignorance, which then prevailed in the Low Countries.

Having procured our billet, my comrade and I sought out the house to which it referred us; and entering by the back door, found in the kitchen, or great hall, a woman, with three children. One of these, an infant, she carried in her arms, while the other two were playing near; and she seemed, at the moment of our approach, to be herself engaged in watching the progress of a pot which was simmering over the fire. When the door opened, she lifted

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herself up; and beholding two soldiers in strange uniforms, she began to cry bitterly. She held up her infant towards us, as if she desired to soften our ferocity by the display; and then, taking off the lid of the pot, made signs that, if we wanted food, it was there at our service. Poor thing! we could not speak a syllable of her language; yet we hastened by signs to assure her that from us she had no cause to apprehend the slightest outrage. We had each a day's provisions cooked in our haversacks, which we drew forth and showed her; and then, pouring a little spirits from one of our canteens, we invited her to drink. She looked surprised; hesitated for an instant; and then, as if reassured by our bearing, pledged us in the Schiedam; then, with a manner which denoted the most anxious desire to make us feel how grateful she was, and how eager to make us comfortable, she bustled about, placing seats for us near the fire, and otherwise assuring us that a good bed would not be wanting. We became the best friends possible in ten minutes, insomuch that the very children, who at first shrank from us in manifest alarm, came near, and began to climb about our knees, and ask us questions which we could not answer.

We were thus occupied, the good woman having transferred her pork and greens to a dish, was inviting us by signs to take part of it, when a man entered, whom we soon discovered to be her husband. He was in the highest possible glee; and pulling out eight rix-dollars, showed them to her, as the price

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which the English had paid him for contributing to transport the baggage along the canal in his boat. Then trying to make us understand, in which he did not entirely fail, that while the French were in occupation of the country, they never paid him a stiver for such services, he in his turn produced a flask of excellent schnaps, and insisted upon treating us. As we knew that the day's work was over, and that there would not be so much as a parade before the morrow, we did not conceive that we were bound to reject his invitation; so down we sat with the jolly boor to his banquet; and his flask, before he put it by again — though when that operation took place I never could quite understand — was by many degrees more moveable than when, in the exuberance of his joy and gratitude, he brought it from its place of safe-keeping.

The little excess of which we had been guilty never brought us into trouble. No alarm occurred during the night, neither was any apprehended; for the enemy, against whom we were understood to be marching, were already disposed of, and Brill was in quiet possession of its civic authorities. There had been no fighting, however, in order to accomplish this, nor, indeed, was there any armed force in Brill by which a battle could have been hazarded; but the burgomaster caused guile to do the work of violence, and the French lost the town without a blow having been struck. It was the custom of the commandant to lead out his garrison occa-

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sionally, for the purpose of manœuvring the men on the glacis; and the burgomaster, taking a few trustworthy fellow-citizens into his confidence, played off this trick upon them:—On the very day which brought us to Delft, he watched his opportunity; and no sooner saw the French rear across the drawbridge, than he closed the gates. At the same time, the doors of a prison, in which a number of Spaniards lay immured, were thrown open; and they, rushing out, manned the walls, and turned the guns against the enemy. It was to no purpose that the handfull of men whom the commandant had left on duty in the place attempted to oppose all this: they were overpowered, disarmed, and made prisoners in a moment; while to the threats of vengeance which, under sanction of a flag of truce, the commandant himself held out, in case he were not readmitted to his post, only an answer of defiance was returned. The French had no guns, no spare ammunition, no stores, no baggage; they could not, therefore, pretend to besiege the place; and for a sudden attack, ladders and fascines were wanting. They therefore marched away, chagrined and mortified, towards Antwerp, leaving the gallant burgomaster and his friends to rejoice over the success which had attended their endeavours.

From Marsleuce we proceeded to Brill, where, as at the Hague, we were received in the most enthusiastic manner; crowds pressing forth to bid us welcome, and attending on our steps as we moved

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through the town. It was not, however, the General's design to halt here — indeed, the distance between the two places would not sanction such a step; yet the good feeling, both of the authorities and people prevailed, and we were constrained to be their guests for a day.

I have no language in which to describe the liberality and kindness with which we were treated. It seemed, indeed, as if there were a rivalry among all ranks as to which should have the honour of entertaining a British soldier; for he alone complained and looked dissatisfied on whom one or more of us was not quartered. But, in truth, the same spirit pervaded every town in Holland, where the French yoke had become as burthensome as French manners were odious, insomuch that people absolutely murmured when they saw us depart, even though aware that we were going to deliver them from their oppressors. I have heard that the feeling in Holland is not now what it was, in reference either to the English nation, or to individual Englishmen. I can only say that, if the case be so, the result, let it spring from what cause it may, is very much to be lamented.

From Brill we marched upon Hevoetsluys, where again we became objects of unmeasured kindness, the people opening out their homes and hearts to welcome us, and the commandant giving directions that to each English soldier a double ration of every sort should be issued. For three days we were, accordingly, as merry as men could be; and on the

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morning of the fourth, being put on board of trachschuts, we were transported, without the slightest fatigue or inconvenience to ourselves, as far as Williamstadt. This is an open town; yet it exhibits marks of hard fighting in the streets, where cannon-balls are still to be seen sticking in the walls; the result, I believe, of one of those contests which, under the guidance of the late Duke of York, contributed little to the renown of the British arms. But when we entered it, there was no noise in its streets except the voice of joy and gladness, that welcomed us as deliverers. We had all the ceremonies of embracing and feasting to go through again; after which, we stood to our arms, and marched upon Steinbergen.

It was now hard upon Christmas, and the severity and continuance of the cold began to tell a good deal to our inconvenience. Even amid the shelter which the town afforded this would have been the case; but the nature of the war in which we were engaged, and the scanty numbers of our troops, rendered it impossible for us to repose for any length of time in quarters. We had not, indeed, occupied our billets in Steinbergen a week, when we were moved forward about six miles, and thrown into villages where the most abject poverty seemed to prevail. Here we suffered a good deal, nor can I say that our situation was materially improved when, being marched back again into Steinbergen, a church was allotted to us as a barrack. Moreover, rumours

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began to circulate of more active operations impending, which the events of each new day appeared to confirm. Thus we moved again to the villages, whence we passed to Oldcastle, not as heretofore, to be petted and feasted, but to take outpost duty, and otherwise conduct ourselves as if an enemy had been in our immediate front. Yet, though from time to time an alarm took place, there occurred no event on which it is necessary to dwell, till a fresh movement carried us to Starbrook, within one easy march of Bergenopzum. Then, however, it was more than hinted that we should soon have an opportunity of striking a blow; and as Bergen-op-zoom lay in a state of close siege, nobody was at a loss to conjecture where the blow would fall.

We had been perfectly tranquil for two or three days, when one morning an orderly dragoon came in from the front; and, inquiring for the commandant's quarters, was directed where to find them. "We shall hear of this presently," was the remark that passed among us; and no great while elapsed ere we did hear of it. "The Coldstream regiment will be under arms an hour before midnight, in light marching order; and the knapsacks and blankets will be left in charge of an officer's guard." Such was the memorandum which appeared in the regimental orderly-books, when they were carried by the corporals to the officers' billets; and the business of packing and depositing the knapsacks in store began soon afterwards. Finally, about eleven o'clock, the bat-

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talion formed with its head towards the Bergen-op-zoom road; and in a few minutes the march began, without a bugle having been sounded, or a drum beaten.

The distance between Starbrook and Bergen-op-zoom cannot exceed twelve miles; and it was calculated that we would be able to reach the lines of the besiegers about sunrise, or a little before it. Of course we anticipated an immediate commencement of the affray; but we never dreamed that in all this a grievous error had been committed, far less, that the hour at which our advance began, ought to have found us at our posts. The effect, therefore, which was produced upon us, when there came back upon the night air the sound of heavy firing, may be imagined. Each demanded of another what the tumult could portend—a question to which no satisfactory reply could be given; while at the same time the column, as if actuated by some involuntary impulse, stepped out; and men closed into their places as if some new formation had been meditated. I shall never forget the state of feverish anxiety into which we were thrown, by an event so little anticipated; or the eagerness with which we longed to obtain some solution of a riddle, alas! too soon to be read, to our extreme discomfort and mortification.

We pushed on all night, the heavy booming of cannon breaking in with solemn effect upon the silence; and became more and more convinced, at every mile of road which we traversed, that sharp

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fighting was in progress a-head of us; for the sharp clang of the musketry soon mingled itself with the cannonade,—now in volleys, now in that broken and irregular rattle which distinguishes the encounter of hostile troops which fight by sections and parties. By and by the firing grew more slack: the artillery ceased — the musketry came by dropping shots only, and now there was absolute silence. "The affair is over," exclaimed we. "One side or the other has prevailed, and we, it is pretty certain, are too late." We were not mistaken in the conjecture: the dawn of day brought us in sight of Bergen-op-zoom, and of the position of the little army by which it had been invested; and the appearance of the latter was in every respect such as to overwhelm us with chagrin and sorrow. Not so much as a single battalion appeared to be in order or entire. Back from the ramparts the men were retreating by twos and threes, or in broken masses; whilst multitudes of dead and wounded covered the glacis, and told how badly it had fared with them in the *mêlée*. Nay, more. A large number of the fugitives were without arms, or even accoutrements, as if they had been prisoners escaped from their captors; while consternation and surprise, and all the usual accompaniments of a failure, were every where visible. I need not add that the escalade of Bergen-op-zoom took place while we were yet on the road to support it; and that, instead of coming up to take advantage of the successes which attended the commencement of

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the operation, we arrived just in time to witness its complete failure.

It is no business of mine to criticise the proceedings of my superiors, neither would I have it supposed that I have any intention of imputing blame to anybody; yet it does seem strange that, in reference to an order so important as that which brought our corps from Oldcastle, any mistake should have arisen. A mistake, however, there certainly was; for if, as was doubtless the case, the General meant to employ us in supporting his attack, we ought to have been in the lines, not at sunrise, but at sunset. For it afterwards came out that our people were actually in possession of the town, and that the Governor needed only an excuse for submitting, which the mere display of our columns, without exposing them at all to fire, would have furnished. Unfortunately, however, when daylight came in, the French looked over the walls, not upon armed masses of British troops, but upon empty fields. They accordingly ran again to their arms; and being much more numerous than the force which had won its way into the bastions, they compelled the very men who but an hour previously they had regarded as victors, to surrender; and all this in consequence of a blunder, which gave us a night march when we ought to have moved by day, and brought us up only that we might be witnesses of the defeat and disorganisation of our comrades.

There was great murmuring, as may be imagined,

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over a result so little anticipated; while greater blame was attributed, according to the soldier's custom, to individuals; yet not the slightest effect was produced upon the morale of the army. We were neither dispirited nor out of humour with ourselves; but felt quite convinced that, would the General send us back again to the fight, we should even yet be able to wipe out the stain from his escutcheon. The General, however, judged more prudently, inasmuch as surprises are not to be effected day after day; so he kept us in the lines only till some arrangements could be come to in reference to an exchange of prisoners, and then moved us back to a village considerably in the rear. There, after the lapse of a few days, our baggage overtook us, and we were once more in a condition to take the field. Nor were we long kept in idleness. The French, it appeared, were falling back upon Antwerp, where it was the business of the allies to shut them up; and many a march and countermarch we took, for the purpose of hurrying them into the evacuation of places where they seemed inclined to linger. Not, however, till we approached Marksam, a village or small town about two miles from the outworks of Antwerp, did any fighting take place; and even there, a brief skirmish was all that occurred. We were moving at that time along one road, having an Highland regiment in front of us; while another, parallel to us, was occupied by some cavalry — either English or German, I do not

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know which. The French, on the other hand, were in possession of Marksam, and seemed indisposed to abandon it; for they had lined the banks and ditches by which it is covered with tirailleurs, and showed the head of a column in the street. With the tirailleurs our Highlanders went immediately to work, and for a few minutes the fire was very animated. But it did not last long: the word was given to halt, prime, and load; after which, the colonel waved his cap, and we advanced in column at double quick. The enemy did not wait to receive us: the skirmishers gathered themselves up, and took to their heels; their main body moved off in all haste; and, falling in with the cavalry, were by them driven back upon the canal, where not a few of them perished. As for us, we halted in the village, and the siege of Antwerp began.

No sooner was this advantage obtained, than our Engineers made haste to turn it to account. We were told off at once into working parties; and I, with many more, proceeded to throw up a battery, which was designed, as we soon learned, to hold four guns. Never were workmen more assiduous at their tasks, nor has there often been imposed upon them a greater necessity for exertion; for we lay within excellent range of the enemy's cannon, and they soon showed us that they were not ignorant of the circumstance. They opened a fire which cut down the boughs above our heads, and overthrew the whole range of muskets which we had piled in

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rear of the battery; yet, strange to say, they hurt no one; and we, having sand-bags served out to us, succeeded, in spite of the intense frost, in getting them all filled and planted, so as to give at least partial cover, before midnight. We were then relieved, and marched into the church, where grog and biscuit were served out to us; and we laid ourselves down under the expectation that, for a few hours, at all events, we should be permitted to rest. But it was not so: at two o'clock a fresh demand was made on our vigilance; and being moved down to another part of the village, we were a second time directed to hold ourselves at the disposal of the Engineers, and to work at another battery which they had stamped out.

We laboured on, alike ignorant and indifferent as to the relative situations of ourselves and the enemy, till the grey dawn of the morning began to break, when we, as was natural, began to look about us. I saw that on our left was a small wood, and that, as if hidden behind its screen, were three or four pieces of cannon; in rear of which a slow match was burning, while the gunners slept in their cloaks hard by. All this was in the natural order of things, yet it seemed to denote that our post was not a particularly safe one; and I was induced, in consequence, to cast my eyes forward, as much from curiosity as from any other motive. For a while there was no distinguishing objects beyond a very narrow space, because a fog hung in the air, and the morning

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seemed to dawn slowly; but at length the day prevailed to a certain extent, and I saw more than was at all agreeable. "There are embrasures there," said I to my comrade, while I pointed towards an advanced work, that stood close to us. "I am mistaken if we don't hear more of it shortly,—so look sharp." The words were scarcely out of my mouth, when the French gunners seemed to have noticed us; and bang came a shot, which, passing harmlessly over our heads, went I don't know where. It was different with another which followed almost immediately afterwards. One man was cut by it quite through the middle, another had his leg carried off, and the heel of a third was torn away; when, striking the hard ground, it began to hop forward, not apparently with greater speed or violence than an expert bowler would give to a cricket-ball. A foolish fellow, who might have easily got out of the way, appeared to take no account of it; for he clapped his spade before it, and cried "Woh!" It was a fatal frolic for him. The ball ran up the handle of the spade, and struck him with such violence in the stomach, that he dropped instantly, and died without a groan.

The enemy fired again, but were not permitted to keep the game absolutely in their own hands. Our guns were brought up in a twinkling; and the battery being in a state of considerable forwardness, one after another they gave tongue. I cannot tell what the result was of the sort of duello that followed, for

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we were moved off almost immediately to a different scene of action; but I saw that our people were expert marksmen, and that more than once, while I stood near, they threw the shot into the embrasures. In like manner there was a cannonade which scarcely intermitted itself, from morning till night, throughout an entire week; at the termination of which, we shifted our position, only that there, also, we might exercise ourselves in the erection of batteries. But why should I continue these details? Let me be content to state that, during three weeks from its first investment, Antwerp sustained the sort of siege which our very limited means would enable us to maintain; and that, at the end of this period, the tricolor flag was lowered, and we, marching in, took possession of the place.

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CHAPTER V.

THE CAMPAIGN OF 1815—BATTLE OF WATERLOO—AND CHELSEA HOSPITAL.

THE war was at an end; Napoleon, driven back upon Paris, had abdicated the throne of France; and Europe was passing again into the hands of its former masters, with such modifications of territory and dominion, and such only, as the political state of the times seemed to require. The country which is now called Belgium, for example, went with Holland to make up the Netherlands; and the head of the house of Orange, after a protracted exile from his home, became ruler of a kingdom more extensive by far than his ancestors ever dreamed of handing down to him. The Orange flag was accordingly hoisted in Antwerp, so soon as the French evacuated the place; and we took the duties of the garrison, not by right of conquest, but as the allies of the Prince whom we had come to aid. With the Protestant Prince, however, the states of Belgium did not accept of a Protestant religion. They stipulated, on the contrary, for a continued maintenance of the Romish Church as their establishment; and being, then at least, bigoted Catholics, they hastened, by means of processions, to purify the town from the pollution

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which recent events had brought upon it. From street to street, and from square to square, whole troops of priests and choristers were descried,—the former waving their incense-boxes, and chanting prayers, to which the latter sang the responses with exquisite harmony. Moreover, twelve children, dressed in white, with gossamer wings attached to their shoulders, so as to represent angels, took part in the pageant, which was attended, also, by bands of music, the waving of numerous flags, and the scattering of flowers. I really cannot pretend to say how far the ceremony was a purely religious one; but I know that it created a prodigious stir in the place, and that part of the business of the persons who continued and went through with it, was to set up again in their places all the images of saints which the French had taken away.

We remained in Antwerp some time, taking charge, for the most part, of the dockyard, till a Highland regiment came to relieve us, on which we marched to Brussels. There we spent the winter agreeably enough, for the duty imposed upon us was light, and we had excellent quarters, at first among the inhabitants in their houses, by and by in a barrack that overlooks the great park. But as spring wore on, rumours of all sorts began to circulate, while the proceedings of the authorities seemed to denote, that they did not reckon on a long continuance of tranquillity. Instead of reducing his military establishments, the King of the Netherlands,

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so early as the month of February, began to increase them. Recruits arrived in large numbers, both to the infantry and cavalry, in Brussels; and from dawn till dusk, the barrack-yards and public parks were the scenes of perpetual drilling. All this occasioned among us a good deal of speculation, which led for a time to no satisfactory results; but the riddle was read at last. Napoleon had never been without his party in France, whose zeal was as active as the measures of the government were ill-judged; and now Napoleon himself, escaping from Elba, was again a prominent actor on the stage of European politics. Why should I attempt to describe the sensation that was produced when the fact of his march upon Paris was made public? For ourselves, we felt that the old game of war must be played over again; and I am bound to add that there were few, if any, among us who expressed a wish that it should be otherwise.

It was some time in the month of May when we received the route, and marched to Enghien. It was, in every sense of the term, a war movement; for we carried our stores and spare ammunition along with us, and found, on arriving at our place of destination, that serious work was pending. A beacon and a telegraph station were both there, the former to be fired in case of alarm by night, the latter to communicate intelligence during the day of any movement in front. In like manner, there seemed to be, on the part of our superiors, a laudable anxiety that we

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should be masters of that portion of drill which is found most useful on the day of battle. We were manœuvred a good deal in the park, and always, on such occasions, practised ball-firing at targets. Besides, we were for ever in a state of preparation to move. Ten minutes would have sufficed, at any given hour of the night or day, to put us under arms; and, as the event proved, the moment was close at hand when the usefulness of this state of preparation was to be tested.

We had been about a fortnight at Enghien, when a sudden order reached us, and we marched in all haste as far as Ath. Our sojourn there was not, however, protracted—indeed, I do not think that it exceeded eight days, at the termination of which, we took up our old quarters at Enghien. There about three weeks more were spent pretty much as we had been accustomed to spend our day when previously there; that is to say, in practising such manœuvres as are essential in the field, and improving ourselves as marksmen. But in these military exercises I took no part: there occurred, during this interval, a change in my situation of which it is necessary that I should make mention,—partly because to myself it was an important one, partly because it brought opportunities of observation within my reach which, as a mere rank-and-file member of a company, I could not have enjoyed.

There is in most regiments, or rather there used to be, a handful of men, artisans or mechanics by

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education, who, carrying axes and shovels, march at the head of the battalion when it is in movement, and are employed on all manner of extra services when it is at rest. In the regiments of the line, these persons are called Pioneers; with us Guardsmen, they are said to be attached to the Commissariat department. While the Coldstream lay for the second time at Enghien, I was chosen to make one in the Commissariat band, and passed, like the rest, in a particular manner under the command of the Quartermaster. So long as the regiment remained in its quarters, it was our business to attend chiefly to the victualling department; in other words, we drew the rations, both of food and liquor, and distributed them in portions to the colour sergeants of companies. We were, on this account, exempted from all parades, guards, and troublesome duty, and in other respects our advantages were not trifling. But when the real business of war began, we had at least our own share of it; and I do not think that I had enjoyed my new honours a week when I felt this. On the 15th of June, we were directed to issue three days' provisions to the battalion; and on the 16th, at dawn, the brigade got under arms, and moved to the front.

It cannot be expected of me that I should give any account of the great battles of Quatre Bras and Waterloo; far less, of the series of operations on both sides which ushered them in. The rapid advance of the French under Napoleon is a matter of history; and for the dispositions which

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were adopted by the Duke of Wellington and Prince Blucher to stop him, higher authorities than the word of an old soldier must be consulted. But I can tell my own tale in my own way; and if it communicate little important information on a subject of such vast and stirring interest, at least it will show how an individual fared and acted during the progress of a battle. Our regiment, then, being formed in rear of the First Guards, began its march soon after dawn. We did not, as it seemed to me, move very rapidly; indeed, the frequency of our halts was matter of some surprise, more especially when the noise both of cannon and musketry came back upon the breeze, and told that in our front men played a game of which the stakes were life and death. Yet our progress was steadily onwards, and in the course of it we passed through a village where a brigade of guns seemed to be waiting for orders. By and by we gained a part in the road which was skirted on the flank by a wood; and suddenly, while they moved on with sloped arms, and expecting no such salutation, a heavy fire was thrown from it upon the leading regiment. There was a moment's recoil, as might be expected, the men shrinking involuntarily from an unseen danger: but there was no confusion; on the contrary, while the infantry made haste to form in a field, word was passed to the rear for the artillery, which, coming up at a gallop, unlimbered on the road, and opened into the wood with great spirit. The numbers of dead

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which were found next day within the line of the forest, proved that the grape and cannister, which our Artillerymen dealt out so freely, had not been thrown away.

We were now separated from the First Regiment, which went I know not where, further than that it moved in a direction whence the sound of firing came back in an unceasing roar. Meanwhile, the Coldstream formed column in a ploughed field; and, piling arms, took such rest as the hour and the situation would allow. The tide of battle was, however, rolling back; for multitudes of wounded men passed us, and the noise grew every moment louder and louder, as if our friends were fighting in retreat. There was something indescribably exciting in all this, and the more that the sense of sight was of no avail, because between us and the scene of action woods and broken ground were interposed; so that except from the direction which the volleys took, we could not judge how the battle might be going. But we had more decisive proof than this in due time afforded, that our friends were not, at least, advancing. A shot, from what part thrown it was impossible to tell, fell near us: another and another followed, till it became evident that one of the enemy's batteries had got our range. The commanding officer, on this, directed that we should stand to our arms, and, moving across the road, we were there halted. Even this trifling change of position doubtless saved many valuable lives. No shot reached us

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there; and there, though without lighting fires, we slept upon our arms; the men lying down in their ranks, and the officers keeping at no great distance from them.

We were under arms, as a matter of course, an hour before dawn on the 17th; and as soon as daylight came in, a working-party was ordered out. The Pioneers, as their office required, accompanied the detachment; and away we went, with bills, and axes, and saws; for the purpose of cutting down trees, out of which an abatis, capable of stopping the advance of the French along the by-road, might be formed. But we had no sooner gained the edge of the wood, than the gleaming of bayonets among its recesses met our gaze; and in an instant the branches and leaves cracked on every side of us, with the shower of balls that fell among them. Immediately the light company hurried down, and an animated skirmish began, which waxed by degrees so warm, that all thought of working with saws and axes was laid aside. Accordingly, Colonel Macdonnel, observing that I and my comrade were without arms, desired us to go away, for the only purpose which we served was to bring a fire on them, and our only chance was that we should be killed for no purpose. Neither my companion nor I experienced the smallest reluctance to act upon the hint thus given. We jumped through the hedge into an open fallow field, and hoped to regain the column by a near cut; but an entire section of French infantry

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were there, and their fire, which they gave us immediately, soon drove us back again within the shelter of the wood. Away, then, we ran, now dodging from tree to tree, now creeping under a bank, when by good fortune we found one; and though deliberately aimed at over and over again, we both reached the battalion unhurt.

Our arrival was just in the nick of time. Already had orders for the retreat been issued, and the French were showing the heads of their columns both in our rear, and in a line of road parallel to that which we occupied; so that the loss of five minutes must have inevitably thrown us into their hands, not, I suspect, to be made prisoners, but to be bayoneted on the spot: for the enemy, both then and on the days which preceded and followed it, seemed to act at all moments under the most violent excitement; they neither gave nor were willing to accept of quarter. Yet was our retreat conducted in the most calm, and deliberate, and orderly manner. Not a section swerved from its proper place in the line of march; not a man stepped beyond the usual rate of travel; the halts which we made were both frequent and of long continuance; and we were all as cool as cucumbers. Among other charges which we received was one to pick up and carry along with us every wounded man whom we might find by the way-side; and we not only fulfilled it to the letter, but we took the trouble to give to the dead something like a soldier's funeral. There accompanied us

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a waggon, into which we lifted the poor fellows whom we found unable to walk; and out of which we removed not fewer than seven, who stood no longer in need of the surgeon. These we laid in the ditches by the road-side; and, with our heels and bayonets, we shook down a little earth, so as to cover them. And all this, be it observed, at a time when within musket-shot of us, and keeping well on a level with our front, a prodigious column of French troops was in motion, with drums beating, and colours waving, horsemen and footmen intermixed; yet neither did they seek to close upon us, nor was the slightest attempt made from either side to bring on a skirmish. We trudged forward, each army having its own line, and after its own fashion, as if we had been friends, whose single subject of rivalry was by which of the two columns some given position should be soonest and most conveniently won.

It was late in the evening ere we gained a ridge of heights, along which we could perceive that the whole army was collecting. The sky, too, had been for some time overcast; and scarcely were we sheltered beneath the gypsy tents, which, with our blankets and muskets, we had been drilled to construct, when the rain began to descend in torrents. It seemed, likewise, as if the enemy had got quite enough of manœuvring; for they, too, halted, and formed a bivouac in the hollow, above which we had established ourselves. But though well pleased to rest under any circumstances, there was one

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grievous drawback to our comforts; we had no fire-wood, nor in all the line of our position could a morsel of fuel be procured. Once more, therefore, were I and my companions of the Pioneers sent out to look for it. We had halted, be it observed, in the ridge beyond Hugomont, which, with its yard and farm-buildings, lay in the dip in our front; and thither we at once betook ourselves, carrying with us the waggon and horses, in which thus far the wounded had been transported. I take it for granted that with the situation and general appearance of Hugomont there are few Englishmen, who feel an interest in the military glory of their country, that can be ignorant. It is, or rather was, a farmhouse, which stood within a walled court, or yard, to which court there was but one entrance; and when I approached it that night, it cannot be said to have been in the occupation of either army. A few horses, only, which an orderly was holding, gave evidence that some officers were there; but no troops, either English or French, thronged it. Accordingly, having filled our canteens with water from a draw-well, which is placed close to the door or gateway of the court-yard, I advanced towards a stack of fire-wood, and was in the act of diminishing its bulk, when the owner came out, for the purpose, as it seemed, of looking after his property; yet I must do him the justice to say, that he made no attempt to stop me; on the contrary, when I complained of thirst, he went in again, and returned with two cans of beer,

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out of which he drank himself, as if to assure us that all was right, and then we were put in possession. The cans were dry enough in two minutes.

By this time three or four officers came forth from the house, one of whom I recognised as General Byng. He was in the act of throwing his leg over the saddle, when a shell coming from the enemy's lines passed over him, and lodged, without bursting, in a dung heap. Others followed fast, on which he asked me hurriedly, what I was doing there; and when I told him, desired me to make haste, and make the best of my way back to my regiment. There was no occasion to repeat that order, seeing that the French, having got the range, were shelling the house and yard with great vigour; so we brought our foraging operations to a close with as little delay as possible, and hastened back towards the spot where we had last left the battalion.

It was high time to make this movement; the French, whether bent on the same visit as ourselves I know not, had parties out in all directions, one of which, to our astonishment, faced us just as we rounded the corner of the wall and were making for the rise of the hill. There were eight or ten of them, all armed; whereas we had no weapons of any sort. They all took deliberate aim at us: how we escaped, I am sure I cannot tell; but though the bullets sung past us in every direction, not one took effect. To be sure, we did not allow the grass to grow under our feet: away we bolted, into a field of

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standing corn, which, as we dodged and stooped, afforded some sort of cover; and they, though they seemed willing enough to make targets of us, never thought of pursuing. Hence we regained the position of the regiment unhurt, but there was no regiment there: it had shifted its ground while we were busy in our vocation, and whither it had gone nobody seemed to know. There are few accidents on a small scale more provoking than this to persons circumstanced as we then were; yet, as everybody who has served even in a single campaign knows, the mishap is not of rare occurrence. Therefore, instead of complaining, we applied ourselves to the task of searching for the stray battalion; and about midnight, or a little before it, our search was crowned with success. About half a mile to the right of their original position, we found our comrades, not under blankets, nor yet comforted by the blaze of their bivouac fires; but seeking what rest they could on the wet ground, and vowing vengeance on the mounseers for the discomforts which they experienced.

Fast and fiercely came down the rain throughout the whole of that night. Even the arms there was some difficulty in keeping dry; and as to men's skins, these, as well as their garments, were as thoroughly saturated as if they had been dragged through a river. It was a consideration, therefore, of the first moment, that at least a comfortable breakfast should be provided for them; and I and

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another were, in consequence, sent off to the rear, with instructions to fetch from a village which lay in a hollow behind the position, a supply of rum and biscuit. Each of the two regiments that composed our brigade had, be it observed, a horse and cart at its disposal; and the Pioneers of both went back together, on the same errand. But to such a state had the rain reduced the sort of track which we followed that, when the carts were loaded, it was found that nothing could be done with them. Our horse toiled and strained his sinews to no purpose: he could not drag the wheels through the mud; and the drivers of that attached to the First Regiment were not in a better condition. "Let us yoke both horses to one cart," said I, "and toss up which shall have the first turn." My proposition was agreed to readily; and, fortune declaring in our favour, we went off at once with our cargo. Seldom has a supply even of grog reached a body of men at a more acceptable season. The messes handed in their tins; we filled them, without pausing to take account whether they were great or small; and having distributed the biscuit, we returned to the village, in order that our friends of the First Regiment might be made happy, as well as ourselves.

It is well known that, though from early dawn our army stood prepared to receive the onset of the French, no aggressive movement was made till about eleven o'clock in the forenoon. On both sides a good deal of manœuvring took place, that is to say, the

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situations of our brigades were more than once changed; and the enemy, as if they had desired to keep the relative strength of the masses equal, made, on their part, corresponding changes. But not till towards eleven o'clock was a shot fired, or a single column of attack thrown forward. Like the gathering of a thunder-storm, however, the battle-field gradually put on a more threatening aspect. Gun after gun was brought into position, masses of infantry drew together, horsemen vaulted into their saddles, and expectation was everywhere on the stretch. At length the French artillery opened: down from their own ridge, and onwards across the dell enormous bodies of men came, shouting as they moved, not, like British soldiers, in concert; but as hounds give tongue when the scent becomes warm, each individual in his own key. Of the march of that living wave against the bands of warriors who waited in silence and perfect self-possession for the shock, I cannot speak. No sooner was the first gun fired, than the Colonel directed me to repair, with my cart, to the village, and to wait there for further orders, as a guard over the little depôt of food and ammunition which the Quartermaster had there collected.

The village into which I was thus thrust lay completely in a hollow. I could not, therefore, see more of the battle than an occasional shift of ground along that portion of our own line which held the ridge above me; but the roar of cannon and musketry,

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which from eleven till seven o'clock was kept up, surpasses all that I have any language to describe, or that my imagination could have previously conceived. Its fruits, too, ceased not, throughout all this lengthened while, to display themselves, in the crowds of wounded and skulking men which came back; of foreigners, whole regiments seeming to me to go off in a body; and of Englishmen, I regret to say, not a few having caught the infection. Not once, however, was the ridge denuded of its defenders, though repeatedly the noise of strife appeared to come from its very crest; while prisoners, from time to time sent back under an escort, told a tale of success at least partially obtained. I don't pretend to be more of a fire-eater than my neighbours; and yet I declare, in all sincerity, that never, throughout the whole course of my military career, have I felt so thoroughly out of my proper sphere as I did that day. More than once my comrade and I talked of joining our companions in the struggle, and nothing, except a consideration of the consequences which would follow were any mischief to befall the stores, restrained us.

It would serve little purpose were I to spin out this portion of my tale by descanting on how we were struck when, far away to the left, a new sound of firing was heard. This was, if I recollect right, about five or six o'clock in the evening, and for a good hour it was of cannon only that the reverberation reached us; but, by and by, the rattle of

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musketry began to mix with it, and we asked one of another, whence the volleys could come. We did not know that the Prussians were then coming into action, far less that they were operating on the flank of an army already broken, dispirited, and, to all intents and purposes, destroyed, by the repeated failure of its attempts to force the positions of the English troops. But there did come, soon afterwards, a sound which there was no possibility of misunderstanding. All at once there seemed to be a cessation of fire on the hill, and then a cheer, loud and simultaneous, and carried from one end of the field to another, told that the British line were advancing. "Hurrah! hurrah!" shouted we, as we tossed our caps triumphantly in the air. "They have beaten them again. Bony has been served out just as Soult and Marmont were. That is a signal for sailing which a Frenchman never yet refused to answer. Oh, for a rush down the hill among the rest of them!" But this we were not to enjoy; on the contrary, while our exultation was yet in its fervour, there came back an orderly at speed, with directions that we should repair instantly to Brussels, and hasten back again with the heavy baggage of the regiment. In a moment our horse was harnessed, and away we went, as fast as the confusion would allow, through the Forest of Soignies, and along the high road to the capital.

Of all the scenes of confusion on which I have ever looked, that which the road to Brussels pre-

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sented, was the most awful. Horses, carts, men, ammunition-waggons; the wounded, the timid, the dying, and the dead, were all thronged together to such a degree, that we found it next to impossible, here and there, to force a passage through them. Throughout the whole extent of way that lies between the field of battle and the city, this was the case; and in the city itself, how shall I describe the disorder that prevailed? The fugitives, as they are always apt to do, had brought back, from an early hour, continual reports of the discomfiture of the allies; and a foreign regiment of huzzars, of which the uniform closely resembled that of the French, gave by their discreditable behaviour more than a momentary confirmation to the libel. These rascals, having fled in a body from the field, were mistaken, when they showed themselves in front of the town, for Frenchmen; and many a sojourner, ay, and native too, hastened to escape from what they were assured was a victorious enemy. Again, such as either would not, or could not flee with the same degree of precipitation, were all crowding the streets in order to ask for news, while the care of their effects—clothes, furniture, and goods—seemed totally forgotten in anxiety about the preservation of their persons. It was to no purpose that through scenes like these we endeavoured to thread our way; or that we inquired in every quarter for the proper authorities, to whom we might apply for the stores of which we were in search. No human being paid the

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smallest heed to our demands, and we soon found that in the darkness of night, at least, it would be useless to press them further.

We were quite worn out: except during the brief and broken sleep which we had been able to snatch, under the pelting of last night's storm, neither minds nor bodies had been relaxed for six-and-thirty hours; and even in the stoutest and most willing of men, there are limits beyond which nature will not go. We made our way into the market-place; and there, under the shelter of a wooden shed, we enjoyed a couple of hours of deep and refreshing slumber. This might be about two o'clock in the morning. But at four we were astir again, and in search of the articles which we had been directed to convey to the front. While thus engaged, another want began to press: we were sorely beset both by hunger and thirst, and, seeing the door of a public-house open, we entered, and called for beer. It was brought, and we drank it; after which, having some occasion to step out, I thrust my head, by chance, into a sort of stable, and beheld what was to me a truly agreeable spectacle. There, in a corner, stood a quantity of sacks, each of which bore the impress of the broad arrow; and each, as on more closely examining it, I ascertained, was filled with biscuit. In an instant I communicated to my comrades the result of these accidental researches; and we determined that, let come what might, the Coldstream regiment should, at all events, benefit

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by it. Away then we went out by the yard gate; and finding in the market-place a waggon with four horses, we made no scruple about appropriating the concern to ourselves. If the waggon had any owner at all, I am quite sure that he was not near to take care of it; so we seized the fore horse by the reins, and leading him into the inn yard, we very soon made free with the biscuit bags. As to the landlord, I am afraid that we did not pause either to explain to him the nature of our proceedings, or to pay for the beer. We made the best of our way out of the crowded town, and were soon posting as rapidly as circumstances would allow through the forest of Soignies.

There was less disorder along the road that day than there had been the day preceding: yet was it by no means clear; stragglers of every sort yet thronged it; and crowds of wounded, some limping to the rear, others conveyed in waggons, or on horses, met us. To these last, many of whom had tasted nothing since daybreak on the 18th, we distributed a portion of our biscuit. They implored us to give them drink, but we had none; yet the food proved very acceptable to most, and we still reserved enough for our comrades in the front. By and by, spectacles even more revolting, began to greet us. As we approached what may be described as the vortex of the struggle, dead bodies became more and more frequent, as if the poor fellows had dragged themselves away from the field, after re-

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ceiving their hurts, and dropped down, one here, and another there, from exhaustion. And at last, when we had fairly crowned the position, no not if I were to live a thousand years, shall I ever forget that scene. There lay the corn beaten into the consistency of mud; the grass was torn up; the deep dints of wheels, and horses' hoofs, and men's tread were everywhere. Arms, accoutrements, tumbrels, cannon upset and disabled; the dead bodies of men and horses; caps, helmets, shells that had not burst —the whole wreck, in short, of an army was there, and the stains of human gore cast their tinge over everything. This was on our own side of the field. With respect again to the ground, on which the enemy had manœuvred, and from which they were swept only by the tide of battle, no power of language would suffice to do justice to the accumulated horrors which it presented; not unaccustomed as we were to look upon death, we were glad to hurry as fast as we could over that, his mightiest banqueting-hall, though all our efforts failed to carry us wide of its traces, even after we had overtaken the battalion.

We found the regiment halted in a wood, grievously thinned in point of numbers, and not a little soiled and wearied and disorganised with the operations which the men had gone through. Hunger, likewise, was pressing them sore; for no bread had been issued out to them; and the cattle, from which the rations of meat were to be taken, were only just

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about to pass into the hands of the butchers. The supply which we brought, was accordingly received with shouts of approbation, and our zeal and activity displayed in obtaining it, secured their merited praise. Some lamentations there doubtless were over comrades whom we should never greet again, and warmest wishes expressed for the recovery of others who had gone wounded to the rear; but soldiers are not, under any circumstances, addicted to the pathetic, and the evening after a victory is hardly the time which they would choose as a season of mourning. The addition of an allowance of grog to the bread and meat already received, made every heart in the bivouac merry, and our sleep was as sound as if the clamour of the war had not just ceased to ring in our ears.

The dawn of the following day saw us astir, and in rapid march upon Paris: no enemy opposed us; no trouble or misfortune befell us by the way; for every town as we came to it, opened its gates, and such of the inhabitants as remained in their dwellings were perfectly civil. At length, when we had arrived, if I recollect right, within two journeys of the capital, we overtook a Prussian division, which instantly stood to their arms, and received us as we passed with every mark of military affection and respect. They were in bivouac to the amount of eight or nine battalions, among some green fields by the way side, and they formed line; their bands playing, and their colours waving to salute us.

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These latter, indeed, they lowered as we passed presenting arms at the same time, and the shouts which followed were both vehement and cordial, for the very best feeling existed between the troops of the two nations.

I am not going to continue a detail of events, which would not possess even the merit of novelty to recommend them. Everybody knows how the British army took possession of Paris; how the French fretted and murmured under a humiliation which they could not avoid; how the strictest discipline was maintained in our ranks, and even the shadow of a pretext for complaint taken away from the people whom we had conquered. In like manner I need not tell of the distribution of the troops among the fortresses, of which for a while the allies determined to keep possession; for myself, I marched with my battalion to Cambray, where, during some months, I did duty, and in the spring of 1816 I was with several others, the least effective men of the corps, sent home. From that time till the month of March 1817, I was quartered in the Tower. My next step was to pass the board at Chelsea, and now after nine years' experience of the out-pension, which was not satisfactory, I have come to spend the evening of my days in the soldier's last home.

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JAMES EWART'S STORY.

CHAPTER I.

THE HOME OF A NORTH OF IRELAND FARMER, WHICH IS NOT TO MY MIND, AND I LEAVE IT.—SERVICE IN VARIOUS FORMS; AND EARLY LOVE.

I AM not one of those who pretend to have passed my life amid continued scenes of active warfare. Some hard knocks I have both given and received, and some long marches accomplished. But mine is not a story of incessant and unrelieved bloodshed, nor yet of constant service before the enemy. Such as it may be, however, it is very much at the service of those who desire to listen to it; and I think, that at least it will not fatigue them by reason of the lack of incident.

My name is James Ewart. My father, a native of Dumfries, removed when a young man to the north of Ireland; and with my mother a Scotch-woman from Ayr, settled in the parish of Annahelt near Ballinahinch, where, on the 6th of May, 1790, I was born, the youngest of three sons and four daughters. I cannot tell what the motives might be which led to this emigration, if indeed, there were any,

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except the mere love of change. I only know that to my father himself it was so far productive of good, that he earned an honest independence by carrying on the business of carman, and cultivating a little farm of about sixteen acres of land. But the north of Ireland is, as everybody knows, to all intents and purposes, a Scottish colony, and doubtless he, like those among whom he dwelt, never dreamed that the mere crossing of the narrow sea had taken him away from the home of his ancestors.

My father, though a singularly honest and upright man, was neither temperate in his habits, nor kind in his behaviour to his family. I believe that he wished us all well, and that in his heart he loved us tenderly, but his method of showing it was not a good one, and the results were the reverse of happy. A bigoted member of the Seceder communion, his ideas of propriety were all of the most repulsive and forbidding kind. Mirth, laughter, dancing, these things were all sinful in his eyes, and he would neither practise them himself, nor permit them to be exercised in his dwelling. Yet, strange to say, that man would drink largely, and he had no objection at all to see those around him inflamed with liquor to a degree that barely came short of absolute intoxication. On the other hand, I never heard him use a profane expression in my life. He always spoke sternly to us; he never cared to win our affections, and lead us in the way which it behoved us to follow: he commanded on every occasion, and

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enforced his commands freely with blows. But the only oath which ever passed his lips, was "By Dad!" and that came out never except when he chanced to be more than usually irritated. A sour, gloomy, harsh man he was, who prayed to God every day with his family about him; but it was not like a dependant supplicating the Great Being from whom all his blessings flow, and to whom his utmost gratitude is due; it was with the tone of a slave who fears his master's anger, and yet is too proud to speak to that master, except in a tone well nigh of defiance. For his religion was certainly not that of the New Testament: it was darker and more relentless than ever gave a colouring to the mind of the Israelite when he went forth to wage a war of extermination upon the Canaanites, and to put old men and maidens, young men and sucklings, ox and ass, without pity, to the sword. With such a man, the Lord's-day was, as a matter of course, anything but a season of gladness. He carried us all to the meeting thrice at the least; except in passing to and fro to which, he would not permit us to breathe the air of heaven if he could help it; and at night, it was one ceaseless exercise of the attention, in reading the Bible, singing psalms, and prayer, till our very bodies grew weary, and our minds exhausted. Ours was not a happy home, and the consequences were, that, one after another, we quitted it as soon as possible.

And yet there was light around that darkness,

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too. My mother presented, in every important respect, a striking contrast to her husband. Not less religious than he, she was the kindest and gentlest of human beings, who never reproved except mildly, and would always, when she could, hide our little failings from my father. We all loved her dearly. For myself, I could have worshiped the very ground on which she trod; and, I believe that this feeling was mutual. But not all my affection for her could make me endure the bondage of home beyond a certain period.

At the age of ten, I suddenly made up my mind to seek out new friends and a new home where I could; and taking advantage, one day, of the absence of both my father and mother, I turned my back upon the place of my birth, and had the wide world before me.

The place where I was born was distant from the town of Hillsborough about ten miles; and to Hillsborough, as well nigh the furthest limit to which my ideas of distance extended, I directed my steps. Indeed I cannot say that there was even this much of system in my first migration; for I had not passed far from my father's door, when I fell in with Captain Eggles's fox-hounds, and after them I went amid a crowd of pedestrians as eager and as thoughtless as myself. On and on we ran, I rejoicing only in this, that I seemed to be carried always further from home, till by and by the fox was either killed or earthed, and Hillsborough stood before me. I

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proceeded into the town. It was evening, and I was very hungry; and having a little money in my pocket, I entered a baker's shop and bought a loaf. I was eating it beside the counter, when the woman, after eyeing me for a long time, asked me whence I came, and whither I was going. It is astonishing how soon we learn to deceive: I did not choose to tell her the truth, fearing that she might inform my father of my condition, so I said that I came from Ballinahinch, and was going wherever there might be a chance of finding employment.

"But, you are very young, child," answered she. "Have you no father nor mother?"

I winced a little at this; but mustered courage to say, "No."

"And what is to become of you to-night?"

"I can't tell. I will sleep anywhere; in a shed, or wherever some kind Christian may offer me shelter."

She was a tender-hearted woman, that Mrs. Geary, and she bid me lie down in her husband's stable: she gave me my supper; and finding that I understood something about horses, she said she would try to serve me. It so happened that a near relative of hers, lived as cook with Archdeacon Dixon, the rector of the parish, and an excellent man: to her, Mrs. Geary spoke about me; and she, having seen and taken a fancy to me also, recommended me to her master. The result of the whole was, that young Mr. Dixon took me to be his own groom, and arrayed

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me in a neat green livery with a velvet collar; and that for two years I was as happy in the Archdeacon's family, as the heart of man or boy could desire to be.

The Archdeacon himself favoured me much, and used to notice me on all occasions. Among other little offices which he made me perform personally to himself, was this:—There was a particular house in the town, which brewed, or had in its tap, a particular kind of beer, a pint of which the Archdeacon chose to have every day with his dinner, and it was my duty, when the accustomed hour came round, to go abroad for that beer. A weary commission for me it proved in the end. Just about the expiration of my second year of service, I went as usual for the Archdeacon's draught, when, whom should I encounter in the market-place, but my father. He recognised me instantly; he quitted his cart of potatoes, which he was in the act of selling by retail, and running towards me, took me in his arms, and wept over me. He called me his lost child; thanked Heaven for having restored me; and insisted that I should return home with him that night. I was very unwilling to give up my good place, and resume my old habits of out-door labour, and in-door discomfort, yet, what could I do? My father went with me to the Archdeacon's: told how I had deserted him; and obtained permission to remove me at once, not a little to the chagrin of my young master.

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In thus withdrawing me from a situation which was not only pleasant in the mean while, but held out a moral assurance of respectability and independence for the future, my father acted not only with imprudence, but unjustly. I returned with him, doubtless, but it was in no humour to adapt myself to his habits; and but a short space of time elapsed ere I once more gave him the slip. I had been sent on a message to Ballinahinch, and was on my way home again, when one day a jaunting-car, in which two ladies sat, overtook me; and one of them, besides looking very hard at me, gave me the salutation of the morning, which I returned. The carriage drove on for a while, and then stopped, as if waiting for me to come up; and the same lady who had spoken before, entered at once into conversation with me. I answered her questions readily, and my style of address seemed to please her, for she immediately demanded whether I should like to go again into service.

"Of all things, ma'am," was my reply, "if I could hear of a place."

"Will you go with us, and take care of the horse and drive my sister and I out when we require it, and make yourself generally useful in a quiet family?"

No proposal could have been made which I should have more relished. I closed with it immediately; and, jumping beside the spalpeen that happened to occupy the box, I went directly home with my new

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patronesses to their dwelling. Once more, therefore, the claims of kindred and relationship were set at nought; and, without having given my father a hint of my intentions, I left him, for the second time, to cultivate his lands by himself.

I lived with this family, which consisted entirely of ladies — of a mother, Mrs. Mackinney, and two daughters — for a year and a half, and a very easy and pleasant place I had of it. My principal business was to groom the old horse, to drive the car, and to lead out Miss Catherine, who, being blind, used to lean upon my arm, as often as she took exercise on foot. I was a prodigious favourite with them all, as well as with the housekeeper and the maids, and had as much of my own way as generally falls to the lot of persons similarly circumstanced; yet I could not contrive to keep my place, and the loss of it I owe, as many better men have owed their misfortunes, to the roguery of a woman. Strange to say, the two sisters, Miss Catherine and Miss Elizabeth, never could agree: they were continually wrangling and jibing one another; and, more strange still, each strove to enlist me upon her own side, as if I had been their relative instead of their footboy. It was Miss Elizabeth, however, with her wicked eyes of blue, that succeeded most effectually in making a cat's paw of me.

"I 'll give you five shillings," said she, one day to me, "if you 'll lead Kitty into a quagmire."

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"Done!" said I, "Miss Elizabeth. I 'm the lad for the five shillings!"

And so, the first day I had charge of Miss Catherine, in the town of Lisburn, I guided her to the side of one of the streets, where the scavengers had raked up all the mud and filth of the place, previously to its removal; and, taking care myself to step clear of the nuisance, I guided her right into the middle of it. She screamed aloud when she found herself far above the ankles in filth, and vehement were the charges which she brought against her sister, as well as myself. But, as they could not turn away the sister, they dismissed me; and, my arrears of wages being paid up, I went about my business.

No consideration whatever would have induced me to go home, so I applied to my friend Miss Elizabeth, to help me in my distress; and she gave me a recommendation to one Mr. Shepherd, a practising attorney, in Lisburn. He was a harsh man, who never could keep his servants, because he gave them plenty of work, with a good horsewhipping from time to time, and very small wages; yet I accepted his place, and determined to act fairly by him; and I think that I kept to the determination. Besides the customary work of an in-door servant, such as cleaning knives, shoes, clothes, waiting at table, and going messages, I had the care of two horses and a car, the slightest neglect of which laid

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me open to very hard words, and once or twice well nigh brought more than hard words upon me. Nevertheless, I slaved on, and if I did not give satisfaction, my impression to this day is that the fault was not mine. Many a time, when hard pressed, I have given a fellow called Friar both meat and drink to help me in the stable; and if the master's larder and cellar supplied the means, as he knew nothing at all about the matter, so he had nothing at all to complain of. But there is no resisting our fate. It was determined that Mr. Shepherd and I should fall out in the end, and the following are the circumstances which led to our separation:—

The attorney was in the habit of attending to the Quarter Sessions at the county town; and on a certain occasion, in the time of Lent, he went from home for that purpose, leaving, however, his horses in the stable, and me behind him, to take care of them. I was not less attentive to the cattle than if he had been at hand to watch me; but on Easter Sunday I learned that some friends of mine were going to visit the great church, and, after the service, to enjoy themselves, according to usage, at one of the inns. I made up my mind to join them; and having engaged Friar to feed and fodder up the horses for the night, I went first to church, and, after the service was over, to the sign of the Blue Boar. A very happy boy was I that night, because there was one in the party of whom I shall have occasion to

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speak again,—a gentle, fair girl, whom even now I loved with much more than the tenderness of childhood; and the hours stole on so fast and so free, that I forgot all about stable, horses, my own bed, and, worst of all, the hour—eleven o'clock at night—when my master was expected to return. But my master himself was not so oblivious, as I found in due time, to my sorrow; for I had but an uneasy sleep of it, after the maid who let me in said, with a peculiarly ominous tone, "O Jem! an' you 'll hear of all this in the mornin'."

I was up betimes, and hard at work in the stable. Never had the horses been more beautifully groomed; never were their racks more judiciously filled, nor the corn dispensed with greater nicety; and I had even begun to flatter myself that the storm might blow over, when the voice of one of the maidens called me.

"What 's the matter?" asked I, affecting an indifference which I did not feel.

"Oh, nothin' at all, sure, barrin' the master wants to have a talk with you."

This was quite enough. I had the pitchfork in my hand at the time; and, thrusting the prong through a ring, I gave it a sudden wrench, and separated the iron from the wood-work. I then took them both up, as if an accident had just occurred, and went forth in order to get them repaired; but when I saw the attorney standing beside the opposite gate, and observed that his hands were behind his

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back, and the top of a horsewhip just visible, I stepped aside ere I went up to him, and unlatched the wicket. This done, I advanced; and sure enough, out came the volley of oaths which usually preceded a horsewhipping, and up went the implement into the air; but it never descended, at least, on me. The handle of the pitchfork was in my grasp; I gave it a back-handed swing, and smack it came against the side of the attorney's head, with a report like a well-loaded pistol. I did not stop to observe the consequences. Two springs carried me to the wicket: away I bolted through it, and not knowing whether my master had kept his feet, or fallen, I ran, as fast as my legs could carry me, clear of the town. Neither did I slacken my pace, nor halt to draw breath, till some good long miles lay between me and Lisburn. In every breeze that blew, I heard the step of a pursuer, and I fancied that I was flying for my life. Accordingly, the thought of home being less irksome to me than the fear of a prison, I made direct for my father's house, where, as I had not been heard of for a year and ten months, my reception was more cordial than I had any right to anticipate.

My father's little farm was a portion of that district which passes by the name of Killford-hill. It comprised, as I have stated, only sixteen acres of land, and could be efficiently worked by him and his sons, more especially since our strength in horseflesh was out of all proportion to the extent of our hold-

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ing. We had not fewer than six horses, with which we were in the habit of carrying to the nearest markets our own and our neighbours' pork; as well as of transporting yarn and manufactured goods from the looms to the sea-ports for embarkation. Of our neighbours, on the other hand, almost all did business on a much larger scale; and hence, though on civil and neighbourly terms with them, I cannot say that any of them were our familiar acquaintances. But young people often draw together when their parents keep aloof; because in childhood, and early youth, artificial grounds of difference are very little acknowledged. Margaret Mogg was my playmate and companion well-nigh from the cradle; she was the daughter of an extensive farmer for whom my father did many jobs, and as fair and gentle a girl as ever lilted a Scottish song at milking-time; and as I was then a slight and singularly good-looking boy, the neighbours used to laugh when they saw us together, and say we would grow up to make a very pretty couple. It is surprising how soon young people, circumstanced as we were then, begin to encourage feelings which are not always the parents of good. From my playmate, Margaret became my friend; from being my friend, she grew into something more tender, till, at fifteen years of age, we were as completely and as purely in love as if our years had numbered a score, at the least. Ay, and the matter did not rest there. We began to talk to one another about marrying, and Margaret, in the sim-

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plicity of her heart, opened the subject to her mother. Alas! neither she nor I were till then aware that there are many and grave objections to the union of hands, which, in seeking their mates, obey only the dictation of hearts. *I* was no fit match for the daughter of Mr. Mogg under any circumstances, and at present it was ridiculous to hint at the possibility of such a thing. Oh! they were hot and bitter tears which we shed that evening, when Margaret, escaping for half an hour from her mother's vigilance, laid her head upon my shoulder, behind the garden-hedge, and told me that she would never be permitted to play with me again! Yet youth and hope are not easily separated; and we determined that, in spite of them all, we should continue to love as heretofore. Nay, more: we met again and again, by stealth; and it was finally arranged between us, that I should go at once and enlist as a soldier, so that she might come with me, whenever the party should be ordered off to a different country. Bright, bright and joyous were my dreams that night, of such happiness as man never has known, and never will know on this side of the grave; and that no time might be lost in putting myself in a train to realise them, I resolved to embrace the first opportunity that might offer of exchanging my civil for a military occupation.

Such thoughts as those which then engrossed my mind, are not apt to endure "a rival near the throne." I became absent and absorbed, and awk-

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ward, even at my work; and my father, not a patient man under any circumstances, soon began to chide me for it. I was galled, but I bore it patiently, till one evening, in ploughing-time, I happened to lead the horses awry, and he got into a great rage, and abused me violently.

"By dad, James," said he, at last, "if you don't mind what you are about, I 'll knock you down with a stone."

I never answered my father insolently in my life; none of us, indeed, would have dared to contradict him, nor did I contradict him then; but I threw the halter over the horses' necks, and, without speaking a word, I walked home. My mother was in the kitchen, and asked me why I had returned alone; but I made no reply to her question. In fact, my mind was made up. Something or another I remember that I wanted, though what it was I have forgotten; but I took it, passed out of doors again, and away I went. What followed shall be narrated in detail, after I shall have given certain explanations relative to the military situation of the country at the moment.

It will be borne in mind that the peace of 1802, by causing a large reduction both in the navy and army, left England very little prepared to renew, at least with effect, the struggle into which the French government was resolved, on the first favourable opportunity, to hurry her. Accordingly, when war broke out again, which it did in less than two years,

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extraordinary efforts were made to enrol men for the public service. Among other acts, one was passed for raising what was called the army of reserve,—that is to say, for the compulsory enrolment of a certain amount of force, which, though not liable to be sent abroad, should yet be available for service anywhere within the limits of Great Britain and Ireland, and the islands immediately contiguous. The mode, again, by which this enrolment took place, resembled that which was used in reference to the militia; in other words, each parish was called upon to furnish a given quota of men, which the authorities were directed to choose from the entire male population, by ballot. Now, as in those days the militias never crossed the water at all, whereas the army of reserve might be marched from the extreme west of Ireland, to the coast of Norfolk, or further if need be, the thought of being drawn for the latter was, to men in easy circumstances, far more terrible than the idea of being obliged to join the former; and it is but just to add, that the law of the ballot was everywhere administered with unbending fairness. Only the clergy, medical men, schoolmasters, and lawyers, were exempt, whereas upon all others the lot was liable to fall, and did fall, as chance might direct, without any respect of persons. I do not mean to say that all were equally bound to serve: he who had the means, might hire a substitute, if he could find him; and I have known as much as forty or fifty pounds given for that purpose.

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But the law recognised no exemptions, save those which have just been enumerated; and I must be permitted to add, a very wise and patriotic law, under the circumstances of the country, it was.

The army of reserve did not, however, depend wholly on the ballot: there were recruiting stations everywhere; and to such as offered themselves voluntarily, the parish gave sixteen guineas bounty, and the crown ten. Six-and-twenty guineas! I had never seen such a treasure in my life; I had no notion that it could ever be exhausted. I fancied that were I put in possession of it, Margaret and I might live, not only in comfort, but in affluence upon it all our days. Besides, I had no horror of soldiering: both my brothers had enlisted, and why should not I? Thus reasoning, I took the article, whatever it might be, of which I was in want; and, without dropping a hint to my mother, in reference to the object that was before me, I quitted the house. Away I then trudged, at a round pace, to Ballinahinch, which was distant from Killford only a mile and a half; and finding out the lodgings of Lieutenant Scott, the recruiting-officer there, I offered myself as one who desired to serve the King.

Recruiting parties were not so particular then as they are now. I was a mere boy—I wanted two full months of sixteen, and my stature barely reached five feet two inches; yet Mr. Scott called me a fine lad, and gave me the shilling. This done, I bought a Jew's-harp for sixpence, and returned home again.

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It was on a Monday that this occurrence took place, and I had leave from Mr. Scott till the Wednesday following, on which day I was to come back and be attested, till the completion of which ceremony I could scarcely, in strict propriety of speech, be said to have taken service in the army at all. Nevertheless, my resolution never wavered for a moment, and I was as reserved in reference to my present step, as I had been with respect to those which preceded it. I went home, as if nothing particular had occurred; and, sitting down near my mother, on a stool beside the fire, I played her a tune on my new harp. By the by, I may observe in passing, that on the Jew's-harp I used to be no mean performer; and that to this day, I can bring some not unmusical strains, even from that, the rudest of all rude instruments. Well, she listened, and said, "Jem, I never heard you play so touchingly as you do to-night. Have you got a new harp?" I looked up at her, and felt my eyes fill, but I made no answer; and so the rest of the evening passed. My father never spoke to me, nor I to him, concerning our little difference in the field. It seemed, indeed, as if by common consent, we had determined, within our respective bosoms, to keep aloof from every topic which might distress or annoy; and we went to bed, after prayers, more perfectly reconciled to one another than I remember, at any previous period in my boyish days, to have been the case.

I stayed at home from the Monday to the Wed-

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nesday, and attended my father, as usual, to his labour on the farm. I saw Margaret, too, as may be imagined, and made her, and her only, my confidant in reference to the step which I had taken. A happy girl was she; for she, with myself, imagined that the one great obstacle to our union was about to be removed, and that, as a soldier's wife, she would be as merry as the day was long. Therefore, all my recollections of these eight-and-forty hours of intermediate existence between the civilian's and the soldier's habits, are undarkened by a single shade of sorrow. I never have been, and probably never shall be, so perfectly blessed again.

Wednesday came at last; and full of hope, joyous, gay, and light-hearted, I seized the first pportunity that presented itself of leaving my father behind, and set off at a smart run for Ballinahinch. I made at once for Mr. Scott's lodgings, who, bidding me heartily welcome, caused the horse to be yoked to his car, and drove me over, without loss of time, to Downpatrick. As a measure preparatory to the process of attestation before the magistrate, I was first carried to a medical man, whose business it was to ascertain that there were no bodily defects about me, such as might render me unfit for military service; and I well remember that, being young and exceedingly shy, they found no common difficulty in persuading me to submit to the ordinary examination. At last, however, by dint of quizzing and enticing, they had things all their own way; and

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the doctor having pronounced me in every respect worthy of my calling, away we went to take the oaths before the magistrate. He was a kind and fair man that took my attestation; he asked whether I was about to act on the dictates of my own free pleasure, or had been deceived by false promises, and even now repented of my choice; and, when assured that I was not willing to retract, he desired to be informed that the bounty was forthcoming, and that I was otherwise satisfied.

"Oh! as to the bounty," said the parish-officer, who had been summoned to attend, "I know his father well; and I will take care that, to the last farthing, it is paid into his hands."

"His father," replied the magistrate, "is not going to enlist for him, and has no right to receive his bounty. Either you must pay down the sixteen guineas on the spot, or I go no further with the work of attestation."

The parish-officer looked aghast; but felt, at the same time, that he had no alternative. He paid the money in the magistrate's presence, and I, having been duly attested, walked out of the court-house a new creature.

It was well for me, determined as I was upon the step, that other and more serious obstacles had not presented themselves; for scarcely had we passed beyond the precincts of the town-house, when my father arrived. Some suspicion of what was in progress had, it appeared, come over him; and finding

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me not at my post, nor anywhere within the hail of the house, he guessed whither I had betaken myself. He instantly saddled one of his own horses, and rode at the top of his speed to Ballinahinch; but there the people knew no more of me, than that they believed I had gone somewhere with Mr. Scott, and it was well-nigh at random that he followed us to Downpatrick. Poor man! I shall never forget the agony that was set forth on his countenance when I told him what had happened.

"Your brothers have both left me," he cried — "left me just as old age is coming on; and now you, also, have turned your back upon me, and there is none to help me."

I tried to soothe, and offered him a portion of my bounty, which, being swelled by the addition of the government donation, amounted to a very handsome sum; but he turned away from it with the strongest manifestations of disgust.

"Touch that!" he cried; "touch the price of blood! No, not for the universe. Boy, you have bartered away soul and body for that base gold. I will have none of it; I would die of positive starvation sooner than have my hand defiled by it."

What could I say? I tried to reason with him— I endeavoured to convince him that I had done right; but he persisted in blaming me utterly. Nevertheless, he consented to share my private lodgings with me, which, in a house near the gaol, I had procured; and there he spent the night, drink-

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ing, as it seemed to me, for the single purpose of drowning sorrow. I did not join him in that exercise —no, not even to the extent of a single glass. In those days, I could not endure the smell of spirits, and even of beer I never partook, except sparingly, and that only at my meals. But my father, whose practice it was to act differently, forgot himself that night altogether, and became excessively drunk. I put him to bed; bribed the servant-girl, to hide the evidences of his weakness; and slept soundly, not in any degree repenting of the step which I had taken.

My father rose next morning, at once a prey to the deep grief with which my proceeding had affected him, and bitterly ashamed of his own weakness in making such a display of his sorrow; I entreated him to go home: and he did so the more readily, that after what had occurred in the night, my presence was evidently painful to him. Besides, I had got a promise from Mr. Scott of another forty-eight hours' pass, to render which, in every respect agreeable to me, was now his acknowledged wish. So he departed, having made a far more touching display of feeling than I ever saw him make before, or believed him capable of making. And now, being left alone, I gave myself up freely to the guidance of an older comrade, and was by him conducted to the canteen, or club-room, which the soldiers were in the habit of frequenting.

"You must pay your way," said the man, who

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opened the door. Half a guinea makes you free of the canteen; but you don't cross the threshold till it is forked out."

I gave him the half guinea readily; but the spectacle which greeted me, so soon as the door was thrown open, had no tendency to lure me back again. Cursing and swearing, and brawling and fighting, were all going on within the compass of these four walls. In the middle of the room stood three couples of boxers, with faces covered with blood, and naked to the middle; they were engaged in a desperate set-to, for the amusement of their comrades, and many and heavy bets depended on the issue of the contest. Meanwhile their respective backers were squabbling and occasionally striking each other without the ring; while such a hubbub arose from time to time, as utterly to shock me, who was then, if not a timid boy, at all events, shy and bashful to an extraordinary degree. I did not stay within that pandemonium five minutes. Horrified with the sights and sounds which it brought before me, I rushed out, and never afterwards during the remainder of our stay at Downpatrick, could I be prevailed upon to return to it.

My forty-eight hours pass came in due time, and light and joyous was my heart when I prepared to take advantage of it. Neither can I say that the result fell in any degree short of my anticipations. There was, to be sure, more of jollification going forward from morning till night, than agreed with

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my humours. All our friends were invited to drink to my prosperity; and the zeal with which they toasted me and my fortunes, was more than commendable. But my blithest moments were now, as they had been previously, those which in secret I spent with Margaret. Now, then, our plans were indeed maturing themselves, and their accomplishment seemed close at hand. It was certain, that we recruits would proceed very shortly to Scotland, where the drafts raised in our district were, it appeared, to be regimented. Margaret and I, feeling that no arrangement could have been devised more convenient for our purposes, sincerely rejoiced in the prospect. Wherefore, it was settled between us that she should have her clothes packed, and every other disposition made for an elopement; and, that warned by me of the day when the march was to begin, she should join me so as to take part in it. Thus the great business for which I had visited home being settled, I lingered out my eight-and-forty hours contentedly enough, and at their termination received my parents' parting embrace, and directed my steps once more towards Downpatrick. And here I must not forget to record a little circumstance, which made a lively impression upon me at the moment, and of which I have often thought since. My mother was, as I have already stated, in everything the reverse of my father. She doted upon her children; and towards me, in particular, her affections seemed to be exhaustless. A heavy heart, therefore, was hers, when

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she learned that I had 'listed: and her parting from me that day was very bitter. She followed me beyond the sill of the door, gazed at me while the tears ran down her cheeks, and exclaimed loud enough for me to hear her just as I was turning the corner of the house—

"There, Bill, there goes the brightest of your boys; and now I am broken-hearted, indeed."

I turned round, smiled to her, and said, "I will come to you again, mother."

Years, long years of toil and danger elapsed, ere I was permitted to redeem that pledge; but to redeem it I was permitted. My father died in my absence; upon which my mother, with her daughter, went back to the vicinity of her native place, and there established themselves. And there, at the close of the war, I found them out, but not till after I had taken such steps as seemed to me most expedient for the purpose of moderating the shock of the meeting. From Boroughbridge, when on my way to Ayr, I wrote a short note to my mother, in which I reminded her of the promise which had been given at the corner of the house at Killford, and sent it before me, by the hands of a countryman, who delivered it faithfully, and earned his reward. How unaccountable are the caprices of fortune! how mysterious, yet kind, the ways of that Providence, by which all the events in human life are controlled and regulated!

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CHAPTER II.

A SOLDIER'S LIFE IN THE ARMY OF RESERVE.—I VOLUNTEER TO THE 27TH REGIMENT.

My journey to Downpatrick, at least for a part of the way, was as happy as the heart which has not yet beat for sixteen years, could desire. Margaret met me just beyond the precincts of the hamlet, and walked with me as far as Ballinahinch; and a sweet, sweet walk it was, albeit, somewhat pensive, during which hope and melancholy obtained, by turns, the upper hand in the conflict which they maintained in both our hearts. On the whole, however, we were the reverse of sorrowful; for when does sorrow ever extinguish hope at the outset till after experience has shown us the intimate connection that subsists between them and the certainty that the one, where it is bounded by things of earth, will sooner or later end in the other. And even our parting—how exquisite it was!

"You will not fail to give me notice, dear?" said she, through her tears, as she clung round my neck.

"You will not fail to have everything in readiness, my Margaret?" replied I, kissing her fair brow, and weeping likewise.

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"Oh, we shall be so happy!" she cried, smiling; "wherever you are, I shall be; and you will always love me as you do now."

"Ay, that I will, Margaret," was my answer, "as long as God shall allow me to love anything."

We embraced, kissed each other again, and separated. Alas, alas! human life brings nothing in our way so dearly, so tenderly beautiful as this fond devotion of young and innocent hearts to one another. I am an old man now, and in many and strange scenes have I been an actor; yet the memory of that day is as fresh in my mind, as if the little incidents that marked it, had occurred only a week ago; and the hallow of the feeling that influenced me then, has never subsided. I never beheld Margaret again; yet, to no other daughter of the race of man, have I given what she received once and for ever.

Margaret went her way, and I pursued my journey. We paused, as will readily be imagined, from time to time, and looked behind, and gave and received the salutations, which grew continually more obscure, till a turn in the road shut out her delicate form at last, and then I knew that I was alone. I ran as fast as my legs would carry me, for a while, as if by rapidity of motion, care were to be put to flight; and the device so far served its purpose, that when I reached Downpatrick, my self-possession had entirely returned. My lodgings were quite ready, and my landlady as civil as she used to be; while

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my comrades, finding that I would not drink, soon ceased to importune me. For some days, therefore, I was as comfortable as in my situation it was possible to be. Yet mine was a spirit which took no share whatever in the gaieties, such as they were, that passed round me. Somehow or other, I began to fear that I had acted unwisely. My father's agony and my mother's grief weighed like lead upon my conscience, and a vague apprehension of involving Margaret in difficulties which might be too great for her, ceased not to present itself to my morbid imagination. Still, hope, the young man's best friend, served to light all the path before me, and I longed for the coming of the hour which was to unite her fate with mine, by a bond which it would be impossible to sever. Thus it was, till at the expiration of about ten days, when a sudden order was issued that the recruits should send in statements of all the monies which they had received from Captain Scott, as well as of the necessaries which had been served out to them. In a moment it occurred to me that such accounts were required only in the anticipation of an immediate move. My heart beat violently as I thought of this; but being resolute to carry out our scheme, I first of all obeyed the commandant's instructions, and then turned to the more agreeable occupation of giving Margaret the warning which had been agreed upon.

It is somewhat remarkable that my father, though sufficiently educated himself, had not given

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the attention which is usual with his countrymen, to the education of his children. We were all taught to read; and reading, both then and afterwards, was, whenever the opportunity offered, my great delight. But I could not at that time form a letter, and even now my penmanship is very imperfect. The circumstance has stood seriously in the way of my advancement in life; yet I do not know that I ever felt the grievance more acutely than I did then; when being both anxious to communicate with Margaret, and desiring to keep my secret to myself, I found the necessity imposed upon me of employing a comrade as an amanuensis. There was, however, no alternative, so I opened my mind to a brother recruit who wrote, at my dictation, such a letter as I believed to be suitable to the crisis in our affairs which had arrived. This I entrusted to a countryman; and giving him half a guinea for his trouble, I charged him to deliver it with as little delay as possible, not into any other hands than those of Margaret herself. Unfortunately for us, the day was Sunday, which Margaret's father, a Seceder like mine, always kept with exceeding rigidity; and my messenger was in consequence foiled in every attempt which he made to open a communication with her to whom he had been sent. He returned long after midnight to tell me this, and to restore the letter, just as he had received it. I was grieved of course—I was more —I was chagrined, and uneasy; yet I looked to the morrow as holding out fresh ground of assur-

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ance, and slept soundly. My horror may, therefore, be conceived, when, at three in the morning, the long roll was beat, and the parade formed in five minutes afterwards, preparatory to moving. What could I do? My messenger was not forthcoming; and had he been at hand, there was not now time to employ him to any good purpose. It would have been useless to ask leave of absence at such a moment; it would have been worse than useless to absent myself without leave. Sick at heart, therefore, and utterly cast down, I took my place in the column, and long before four we were in full march towards Belfast.

From time immemorial the same tune has been played by band and drums, by bugle and trumpet, as often as troops have been ordered away, if it were only that they might pass from one peaceful quarter to another—"The Girl I left behind me." With how many strange and melancholy recollections is that wild, but not unmusical, air associated! I have kept time to it often enough, as well at home as abroad, and sometimes its notes have vibrated painfully over the chords of my heart; but on no future occasion was it the source of such deep and bitter grief as that to which, during the march from Downpatrick, I surrendered myself; and yet, had I been less under the influence of melancholy, I might have seen, in the first of my military movements, a great deal to amuse. Falstaff's ragged regiment was, I am sure, a well-equipped and orderly battalion in

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comparison of ours. We were without uniform, without arms, without baggage, except the small quantity which each of us carried in a handkerchief over his arm; and our coats, and hosen, and hats, might have served, where such things were, to equip scarecrows throughout the whole length and breadth of the country. Moreover, the melancholy tune of which I have spoken was poured forth in their own peculiar style, by a drummer and fifer whom the authorities had hired for the purpose, and who, for that day, left Punch and Judy behind them; while in the ranks, if ranks they deserve to be called, were thrown indiscriminately together, giants of six feet and a half high, dwarfs of less than five feet, old fellows with grizzly beards, and boys with no beards at all; the fat and the thin, the straight and the crooked, the very offscourings, as it seemed, of a dozen parishes at the least, all talking at the very top of their voices, and not a few under the strong influence of drink and tobacco. I never witnessed such a scene in the whole course of my life, and shall probably never have an opportunity of witnessing its like again.

Utterly dejected and cast down, I trudged along, one of this motley crew; when at a place called Saintfield, about halfway between Downpatrick and Belfast, my father rode up. He had heard of our movement, and was come out again to see and to reproach me, which he did, with less of sternness, and more of feeling, than was his wont.

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"You have left me alone in my old age," was his expression, "and I must now hire strangers to help me. Your mother will break her heart, and our hearth will be desolate. You are my son, my youngest-born, such to me as Benjamin was to Jacob; and I cannot part from you in anger, though you have forgotten your duty, and sold your very blood."

"No, no, father," I replied; "you take a wrong view of the case. Why should I be a burthen upon you, when the world is open to me? And see, I am rich: let me prevail upon you to share the bounty-money with me."

"I would not touch it were it to save my own life!" cried the old man, turning away with an expression of horror from the handful of gold which I offered him. "What! the accursed thing—the price of my son's soul! Take that, and hope to thrive upon it! Why, nothing would ever prosper with me again. No, my boy; keep your gold—you have earned it too hardly; and may God avert from you the calamities which your misconduct has deserved!"

He went on in this strain during the whole of the remainder of the march, now speaking in terms that chafed me sorely, now melting me altogether with the display of his sorrow. He would have had me ride, too; for he said that I was too young to encounter so long a walk; and when I refused to mount his horse, he insisted on carrying my baggage. I gave

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him the handkerchief, which he fastened to the pummel of his saddle, and in this manner the journey was continued. At length we entered Belfast, where I got a billet on a public-house called the Coach and Horses; and my father still bearing me company, we dined in a private room together. I have the most distinct recollection that the dinner in question cost four shillings a-head,—a large sum for persons in our rank of life; and that, though he would not allow me to do more for him, my father made no objections to my paying the bill. However, I am far from saying this in the spirit of unkindness; on the contrary, I record the fact as testifying to the strength of the attachment which still bound us together; because a proud man such as he will rarely accept the minutest favour, except at the hands of those whom he loves in perfect sincerity.

There was no excess committed to-day, nor any such occurrence consequent upon it, as that which involved us in our trifling difficulty at Downpatrick. We went abroad, on the contrary, so soon as the meal was finished, and wandered about the town, still in the same depressed state of mind as when we met at Saintfield.

"You will carry back some memorials of me to my mother and sisters," said I, "if you will not accept anything for yourself?"

And as he did not object, I bought a shawl or two, and some ribbons, which he undertook to convey to them.

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"And, father," I added, half choked with my own sorrows, "give this to Margaret."

So saying, I tore the cockade out of my hat, and thrust it into his hand. Woe is me! that was a bitter item in the sum, as yet small, of my existence. Manhood, in general, may have, and I doubt not has, darker and deadlier griefs to encounter than mere youth; but for myself, I can assert that never, from the earliest period of my recollection to the present hour, have I wept so many, or such hot and scalding tears, as chased each other that day over my cheek, and moistened my pillow at night after I lay down.

The ships were in the harbour that had been appointed to take us on board; and the orders required that we should embark at five o'clock in the morning. My father and I were both up long before the hour appointed, and it seemed to me as if he had made up his mind not to leave me. Go where I might, he was sure to follow. From room to room, in doors as well as out, he tracked my steps continually, and spoke all the while so gloomily, that I began to regard him with sentiments well-nigh of terror. By and by, the word was given to fall in, and march to the quay, and even then the old man stood near me. I could not bear this any longer, so I determined, let the consequences be what they might, to escape from him. Accordingly, after we had begun to move, I watched my opportunity, and passing in an instant through the throng, at a moment when some check had occurred at the head

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of the column, I darted down a lane unobserved by him, and never saw him more; for the lane communicated with a street which led round in a different direction to that through which we were passing, and I, being aware of the circumstance, did not fail to take advantage of it. I got ahead of the whole party, and was the first of the batch to plant my foot upon the ship's deck, whither my father made no attempt to follow. I am inclined to believe that, observing my sudden start, he imagined that my resolution had given way at last, and that I was deserting; and if the case be so, he doubtless expected that I would rejoin him at home, if not elsewhere. But however this may be, he did not seek me out on board ship, and we never met again. Poor man! I am sure that he meant to do his duty by the whole of us; and that his religious feelings were as sincere as they were gloomy; but the consequences of his mode of conducting matters became to all of us distasteful in the extreme; and one after another we quitted home, as soon as a convenient opportunity afforded.

Our destination was Greenock, which we reached without the occurrence of any accident, though a gale of wind took us when opposite Ailsa Craig, and tried our sea-worthiness sorely. We weathered it, however, scarcely to my satisfaction, for I was still the prey of melancholy; and our landing took place in the presence of a crowd of eager spectators.

"Eh, sirs! the poor bit laddy!" exclaimed an

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old woman, when I stepped on shore. "He 's no fit to gae sodgering, that callant. Send him hame to his mither."

"Od the King maun be sair in want o' men, when he taks the like o' you, child," cried a huge fellow in a carrier's jacket.

"Lord safe us! sic a regiment o' tatie bogles!" exclaimed a third.

And so, amid jeers and jokes, not unmixed with expressions of kindness, we made a sort of formation on the pier, and marched up to the market-place, where our billets were served out. But we did not remain in Greenock more than a single night. At Edinburgh, one of the great depôts for regimenting and organising the Reserve had been established; and for that place, on the morning after our disembarkation, we began our march.

We never went near Glasgow; through Port Glasgow, likewise, we merely passed; and then striking into the road which leads to Bathgate, we made our way, from village to village, across the country. I forget how long we were upon that march, whether three days, or two only; but I remember that, on our arrival, we were put at first into billets in the Grassmarket, where the people behaved to us very civilly, and showed us great kindness. Indeed, I may remark, once for all, that there is no part of the empire in which the soldier seems to command so much respect as in Scotland. The Irish, to be sure, are very friendly with him, and

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will drink with him whenever he likes; but the Irish are too poor to drink, except at his expense. The English,—as far, at least, as my experience goes,—take every opportunity of cheating and showing that they despise him; but the Scotch deal with him, when he comes under their roofs, as if he belonged to the family; and though what they have be poor, he always comes in for a share of it, and a welcome. We were, therefore, well pleased with our billets in the Grassmarket, as, indeed, we had every reason to be; but we did not enjoy them long, for about noon next day we were ordered into the Castle, where a portion of the barracks was allotted to us.

There occurred two events at this time, both of which exercised some influence over my future destiny, and of which it may not be amiss if I make mention. The first of them it is not pleasant to relate. A poor half-witted lad belonging to our batch, having lingered at Bathgate, did not come in till we had been an hour or two settled in our new quarters. It was ridiculous to suppose that the creature had erred intentionally. He said himself, that he never awoke till some hours after we were gone from the village; and the fact of his following, and of his arrival voluntarily, though late, at the rendezvous, showed that at least he harboured no inclination to desert. Yet he was tried by a drum-head court-martial, found guilty of desertion, and sentenced to receive three hundred lashes. I shall never forget the sickening sensations which came over me when,

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with my boy-comrades, I was obliged to stand by, and watch the progress of that punishment. It was a cruel exercise of power: I do not think even now that it was called for. I am sure that, in these days, it would no more be perpetrated than I would perpetrate murder. There was not a cheek in our ill-formed ranks that did not grow pale as we gazed, and several were carried from the parade ground in a state of insensibility. For my own part, I cannot tell how I felt: my flesh seemed to creep at the bare possibility of such a fate ever befalling myself, and I determined on the spot that I would at least strive not to deserve it. I kept that resolution faithfully; and throughout a service of many years, I can boast that the severest punishment that I ever was awarded, doomed me to an hour or two of drill, or an extra guard or piquet.

The second is at once more important in itself, and much more pleasant to record. Probably I need not state that, though the army of reserve was enrolled for purposes of defence only, great care was taken to render the home service as little agreeable as possible; in other words, that every inducement was held out to the men to transfer their services to the line, and so to become available for employment in all parts of the world. Accordingly, we were all paraded one morning in the barrack-square; and officers and non-commissioned officers from several different regiments being present, the question was put whether any of us would choose to accompany

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them. I was then exactly five feet two inches in height; and being of a delicate complexion, I looked even younger and feebler than I was; yet, somehow or other, I stood that morning on the right of the line, and was the first to whom the commanding-officer addressed himself.

"My little boy," said Major Nino, taking off my hat, and patting me on the head, "would you like to be transferred to a regiment of the line?"

Now, Major Nino was a remarkably tall and athletic man; and the contrast between us, as he spoke to me, could not fail to be striking: yet I was nothing daunted, so I looked up into his face, and said that I would.

"Well, my boy," said he, "what regiment would you wish to join?"

"The 27th, sir," answered I. "I have a brother in that regiment, and I should like to go to him."

"So be it, my lad," replied the Major. The 27th is the very regiment we could wish you to select. Step out, then, to the front; and look, men,—let this poor boy be an example to you."

I did step out, and the example was not lost upon them. Almost to a man the entire batch which had accompanied me from Downpatrick, declared their willingness to undertake general service; and the 27th, of which they were then raising the second battalion, received, in consequence, a large accession to its numbers.

I had received at Downpatrick the double bounty;

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that is to say, sixteen guineas from my own parish, and twelve from the crown. The tender of my services to the 27th Regiment earned for me ten guineas more; so that, not having got rid of half my original stock, I found myself once more oppressed with a consciousness of wealth. Moreover, our willingness to go wherever the King might desire to send us brought other advantages than this along with it. While the persons who hung back, and kept to the army of reserve, were subjected to numerous restraints, and employed on all manner of irksome duties, we volunteers received permission to dispose of ourselves as we chose; indeed, the Castle-gates were opened for us, to go out and come in at all hours; and to roll-calls and tattoos we were hardly expected to pay heed. As was to be expected, many irregularities ensued; for soldiers, even when experienced, are not the most thoughtful of human beings; and these poor recruits had no other ideas of enjoyment, than such as might be found in public-houses, or places of still more objectionable repute. Now, I had no taste for these amusements. I would have as soon drunk poison then, as ardent spirits; and swearing and ribaldry only shocked me, for I had never from my childhood been accustomed to them. But, like a boy as I was, I took a fancy to traffic in watches; insomuch, that at one period I could boast of possessing a round dozen of them. Let me record a trifling anecdote or two, of which this statement reminds me.

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Among others who had enlisted at Downpatrick, and accompanied us on the march to Edinburgh, but who would not extend his services, and of course did not come in for the third bounty, was a fellow of the name of Macgra, a married man, whose wife appeared to take a great interest in me; but who, as well as her husband only desired to plunder me. Out of one of my watches, a very pretty little thing in a tortoiseshell case, Mrs. Macgra contrived to swindle me; and if the worthy couple had stopped there, their names would never by me have been mentioned or remembered; but Macgra, though he got no third bounty for himself, conceived that it might be possible to come in for a share of mine. Accordingly, one evening, when we sat together in a public-house, he asked me what money I had about me; and when I told him, expressed a wish to see it, and undertook to tie it for me, by a peculiarly safe knot, in the corner of my handkerchief. I gave him nine guineas and two half-guineas in gold, which he wrapped up as he had undertaken to do, and then returned me the handkerchief.

"You are to embark to-morrow morning at Leith," said he. "Take my advice, and don't undo that knot till you land; otherwise, when you are ill, as you are sure to be, some of those about you will very probably make free with your cash."

I knew that we were to embark on the morrow, for orders had been issued to that effect; and I believed that if I were careless of my money, some such

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accident as that to which he referred, would very probably occur; but I entertained a shrewd suspicion of my friend Macgra likewise, whose shuffling mode of lodging the gold in the handkerchief had not escaped me. Without, therefore, pretending to dispute the justice of his conclusions, I replied,—

"Very likely; but it may be as well to see that all is right ere I go on board."

And so I undid the knot, and, behold a guinea and a half were gone! I charged him with the robbery, which he denied. I told him that I was not to be bamboozled by him, and desired that he would restore the money; upon which he swore at me, threatened to throw me out of the window, and, rising up, quitted the house. The tattoo-hour was about to strike, and his wife was with him; but I threw myself between them, and keeping close at his elbow, did not permit them to hold any communication with each other till we reached the Castle-gate. I then told the sergeant of the guard all that had happened, and Macgra was detained and searched. Sure enough the guinea and the half-guinea were both found upon him, but nothing more came of the matter; for I was not serious in pressing my charge against him; and, having recovered my money, I prevailed, after a good deal of pleading, to have him set free, and departed.

So much for one little affair connected with my passion for watches, the moral of which is not very creditable to the honesty of one of his Majesty's re-

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cruits. Another I must relate, because the issues of the adventure were altogether different. I had no use for twelve watches; so, after keeping them for a while, I determined to dispose of all except two; and one I sold to a Scotchman, whom I used occasionally to meet at the public-house, but whose name and residence were alike strange to me, further than that I knew he was in the habit of using a stable in one of the streets that adjoin the esplanade. My friend agreed to give three guineas for the watch — a very fair price, because the watch was a good one; but he had no more than one guinea about him when the bargain was struck, and could only promise to make good the deficiency on some future occasion. Well, I gave him the watch, put the guinea into my pocket, and for some days heard no more of him, till, on an inquiry, I found that he had given up his stable, and was gone, nobody knew where. I took it for granted that my two guineas had gone with him, but I was mistaken. About a week after the sale had been effected, my Scotch friend sought me out in the barracks, and handed me the two guineas in silver and copper coins.

"I suppose you thought I had given you the slip?" was his form of address; "and troth ye weel nigh deserved it. Ye hae fa'an into the hands of an honest man for ance, but dinna try the same game over again. Siller down, or good security; that 's the way to mak bargains. Him that trusts a stranger ower far, ayes lives to repent it."

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There was good sound sense in what the Scotchman said, and I did not immediately forget it; but I have certainly not to boast that my chapmanship added much to the amount of my resources. When we embarked at Leith, my stock of cash had dwindled down to the ten guineas, of which mention has already been made; and out of my assortment of watches, two only remained to be dealt with, as I shall have occasion to show in the sequel.

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CHAPTER III.

PORTSMOUTH—MALTA—SICILY, AND ADVENTURES THERE.

FROM Leith to Gravesend we passed in five days, in one of those neat cutter-rigged traders, which, to distinguish them from other coasters of a similar build, were called smacks. I have nothing to record, either of the voyage itself, or of the day's halt which was afforded us at its termination, except that the languor incident to the one disposed us to make the most of the other. Neither can I bring to my recollection any incident as having occured on the march to Portsmouth, of which it would be worth while to take more than a very passing notice. I remember, indeed, that at Horsham our landlady behaved very ill to us, and that we took a sort of revenge which had more of fun in it than malice. Having persuaded us to accept, in lieu of dinner, a pot of beer per man, and so to save her household the trouble of cooking on a Sunday, she sent us for supper a piece of the flank of beef boiled, so fat and so flabby, that we could not taste it. No remonstrances on our part, however, could prevail upon her to change it; so next morning we cut it up into slips, and smeared

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with it the sheets of our beds, till we left them in a perfect lather. Again, at Petersfield, which was another of our halting-places, the publican contracted, at the rate of sixpence a head, to furnish a dinner for our whole party, women as well as men being reckoned sixpences. This was a good bargain for him, inasmuch as the allowance from Government extended only to the men, who generally contrived to save as much from their own messes as would supply the wants of the women and children. But at Petersfield we wished to do the thing handsomely, and he agreed to set out our meal for us under a shed, where we might eat it in comfort together.

At the appointed time, we repaired to the mess-room, and saw, sure enough, a line of pies arranged, at remote intervals one from another, along the extent of a very large table. There was a laugh, and the expression of sundry doubts whether the pies would serve their destined purpose; for our appetites were all excellent, and a good long day's march had not sufficed to deaden them. But when the crust was broken, and bare bones, the residues of former feasts came to light, one loud and simultaneous burst of indignation shook the building. I never saw people in a greater rage; indeed, it was well for mine host that he contrived to be out of the way, for I really believe they would have done him some grievous injury had they succeeded in laying hands upon him. Yet he made nothing of his knavery. The commanding-officer was sent for; he

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brought the mayor to the spot; and a fresh dinner of substantial beef and mutton was forthwith ordered to be provided. Nevertheless, neither our grievances, nor our determination to obtain redress for them ended there. The landlord, smarting under the infliction of a double dinner, sent us into a loft to sleep, where there were neither mattresses nor blankets, nor anything but foul straw to lie down upon, and where vermin of all kinds was abundant. Nobody thought of taking his rest, of course, and only a few, myself being of the number, kept within doors; the rest sallied forth a little after midnight, and, making for a pond in the garden of the inn, effectually cleared it of all its fish.

Morning came at last, and with it the muster in the inn-yard,—the arrangement of such a column as we had as yet learned to form, and the march. We went off in high glee, notwithstanding the scurvy treatment that had been awarded us; and many a laugh was raised as the consternation of mine host was pictured forth when, coming to his pond for fish, on the excellence of which he particularly prided himself, he should find the waters refuse to render up their treasures. Nor was the joke long confined to those with whom it had originated: we had proceeded but a few miles from the inn, when a tax-cart came after us at a furious rate, and out sprang Boniface and the town-beadle, clamorous about the loss of his fish.

"Your scoundrels have robbed my pond!" said

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he to Major Nino; "and I insist upon finding out the delinquents, and bringing them to justice."

There was a halt, of course, and an examination of kits and haversacks; but no fish were to be seen. The innkeeper looked aghast; the major was furious, and the recruits were in fits of laughter, which they did not endeavour to suppress.

"You stop the King's troops on a march!" cried the major; "you presume, rogue as you are proved to be, to bring a charge against honest men! You shall hear more of this, you may depend upon it."

Away slunk Boniface, entirely chop-fallen, and loud and long were the hootings with which we greeted him; and then the major turning to us, demanded, whether we had really carried away the man's fish.

"Oh, the devil a bit, then, yer honour!" exclaimed Dan Hoolaghan. "We only jist 'took thim out o' one place, and put thim in another. If he'll be after looking over the high wall there, mayhap he may find thim."

And Dan told the truth; for, our fellows bent only on mischief, tied up the carp and tench in an old haversack, and threw them over Sir John Joliffe's park wall, which adjoined the garden of the inn. Thus we had two-fold satisfaction for the wrong which a griping publican wanted to put upon us, and taught him a lesson, which for his own sake, I hope he did not afterwards forget.

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At length we drew towards Portsmouth, and our arrival being expected, there came out to meet us the band of the regiment, together with a large number of our future comrades. Among them, was my brother: I knew him the moment he appeared, and my heart beat quickly, as I saw him approach, and expected to be taken to his bosom; but he did not so much as speak to me. He gazed at me with a vacant stare, and passed on. It was very foolish not to bear in mind, that some years had elapsed since we parted, and that though the change which they had wrought on him, might not be very marked, my appearance, was in all probability quite changed by them. Yet so it was, that the truth, however obvious it seems now, never once occurred to me. On the contrary, I fancied that he was determined not to acknowledge me, and my mind being still darkened with the memory of past sorrows, I burst into a flood of tears, and wept all the way to my billet; nay, more; do what I might, the evil impression thus early produced, could never afterwards be effaced, so that my brother and I, even when we did come to an explanation, drew very little together. But that is not worth dwelling upon: I dried up my tears; I went with the rest to be inspected; I tried to look as cheerful and robust as I could; but it was with some difficulty that I passed muster. The regiment, be it observed, though as yet neither arms nor clothing had been issued to the men, was under orders of embarkation for Sicily,

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and now the inspection took place, for the purpose of leaving at this depôt such as appeared unequal to the fatigues of active warfare.

"What can be done with a boy like this?" said Colonel Warren, when he came to me. "It 's no use taking him abroad. Send him back to Edinburgh, he may be of some use there; but to us he would only be an encumbrance."

I cannot describe the distressing effect which this sentence produced upon me. Somehow or another I had set my heart upon going abroad, and I felt as if to be returned to the depôt at Edinburgh would kill me quite. I went, therefore, to Captain Ross, to whose company I had been attached, and implored him not to leave me behind. He was very gentle and considerate, but could promise nothing, except that he would try and get me appointed a bugler, in which case my diminutive stature would not tell against me, and I should probably be allowed to accompany the regiment. Away, therefore, he went; and in a few hours afterwards, I had the satisfaction to find, that as a bugler, I was thenceforth to be rated. But here, again, fortune declared against me. As I passed a group of old hands, I saw them look at me very hard, and then one said,

"Oh, he won't be able to give much of a five-and-twenty."

I stopped, and asked what they meant; when, for the first time, I learnt, that being a bugler, it would devolve upon me to inflict corporal punishment,

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whenever it might be awarded. Now, I had suffered enough from having being a spectator in such a scene; I would have destroyed myself sooner than become an actor in it; so I went back to Captain Ross, and told him that I still desired to go abroad, but that I could not go as a bugler.

"Well, my boy," was his answer, "I can do nothing more for you. You must take your chance, and there is an end of it."

On the 20th of May, 1806, the second battalion of the 27th regiment embarked at St. Helen's. Not having been explicitly forbidden, I went with my comrades on board of ship, and for some days, I remained there on sufferance; but there seemed slender chance of what was to me a very painful sentence being reversed, and I was quite in despair. At last, when everybody knew that the early tide of the following morning would float us off, Captain Ross, made one effort more to indulge me, and succeeded. There was a sort of half rogue, half fool, in our company, called Barney Loo, who, whatever his other excellences might be, was not considered the most pugnacious member of the corps. Him Captain Ross sent for to the poop, and desired him to bundle up his traps, and get ashore. A more acceptable order could not have been addressed to Barney, who obeyed it on the instant, merely saying,

"I always thought I had a catch in you, Captain; and so I have found you." And then, away he

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went, as fast as his legs could carry him, into a bum-boat, that lay along aside.

"And now, young fellow," continued the Captain, addressing himself to me, who had been his messenger in fetching Barney, "get you between decks, and keep snug. I attach you to the swabbers' mess, where nobody will think of looking after you till we are too far at sea to send you back."

For the first time since I quitted home I felt, at that instant, something not far removed from happiness. I ran down the companion-ladder with a light step, and creeping early to bed, did not rise till the motion of the vessel, and the noises that were going on over head, assured me that we were at sea.

However strange it may sound in the ears of those who knew me afterwards, I was in 1806, a singularly shy and timid boy: I felt as if I stood in need of some kind hand to support me; that collision with the rougher spirits round me, was more than I could bear; and, that home, with all its drawbacks, was, in fact, the place for which, from the constitution both of mind and body, I was most fitted. My satisfaction, therefore, at being permitted to accompany the regiment abroad, soon began to subside, and visions of happy days that would never come again, flitted continually before me. I wish that my brother had been less harsh and neglectful than he proved himself to be. In his presence, I had counted as rendering the quarters of the 27th, be they where they might, a second home; and now,

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when he not only neglected, but was among the most forward to reproach and knock me about, I confess that my spirits sank within me, and I became quite depressed. Every duty which they desired me to perform felt, and, moreover, was, a burthen to me; I had no heart for anything, and my messmates did not endeavour, even physically, to strengthen me; for they took my very provisions away, and left me often a whole day without food. Under these circumstances, I soon got upon the doctor's list, and was probably saved in consequence. Be this, however, as it may, the voyage continued prosperously enough, till the fleet approached the Straits of Gibraltar, when a sudden gale of wind took us, and we narrowly escaped shipwreck. We cleared the coast with some difficulty, and found ourselves separated from the convoy; an awkward situation for a single ship to be in, at a period when England was at war not with France only, but Spain also; so the captain put his helm up, and we ran at once for Malta.

Though a single ship, we were not absolutely helpless; for we carried eight guns, and a letter of mark, on which account, the agent for transports took his passage with us, and a pendant floated from our mast-head. We were not, therefore, under any serious apprehensions, at least on account of privateers; yet I believed that we were all, the agent lieutenant included, very well pleased when, under the guns of Fort Emmanuel, we cast anchor. Then arose the question what was to be done with

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us. We could not tell whither the head quarters of the regiment had betaken themselves, because the fleet's destination had not, I believe, been made publicly known; and to cruise about in search of information would have been madness. A representation was, therefore, made of the sufferings of the troops from long confinement, and the governor gave orders that we should land, and occupy barracks in Fort Emmanuel. This was done accordingly, and there came a fresh recommendation, very kindly meant on the part of him who made it, but not so easily attended to by Captain Ross, our commandant. The governor desired that the men should be indulged with an excursion to La Valette, and that sixpence a piece should be issued to them, on account of the pay. Now, sixpence is a small sum; and a hundred and fifty sixpences don't amount to much; yet, a hundred and fifty sixpences was precisely such a sum as Captain Ross, but for my intervention, might have found it impossible to raise. He had no money of his own, neither had the rest of the officers; neither was there pay-master, or quarter-master on board from whom to procure it. What was to be done? We, the privates, were asked, whether any of us had money; and if we had, whether we would lend it. I mentioned some time ago, that I had brought with me from Edinburgh two watches. These I still possessed; for though it had been my original intention to give one of them to my brother, his unkind treatment of me

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since we became mutually known to each other, caused me to change my mind. Immediately, therefore, that the state of affairs was communicated to me, I sold my watches for twenty-eight dollars a piece, and handed over the proceeds to Captain Ross. I never found cause to repent of having done an act at once so becoming and so well timed. From the outset Captain Ross behaved well to me. He took compassion on my extreme youth; and seeing me depressed and melancholy, used his best exertions to reconcile me to my new mode of existence; but after this he became, in every sense of the term, my friend. When I was ill, he looked after me as if I had been his son. At night, if the weather was cold, he would go into the room where I slept, only to ascertain that I was properly covered up; he made me do my duty, as became him, but it was always by showing me that no man can be at ease who neglects it; and I repaid his attentions with the most devoted affection. So much for a boyish propensity for watches, out of which at one time no other results than a useless expenditure of money bid fair to spring.

We remained at Malta about a fortnight, at the termination of which period a sloop of war arrived with orders that we should pass over, and join the rest of the battalion in Sicily. We re-embarked without delay, and reached Messina just in time to behold the landing of the wounded, which the battle of Maida had sent back, many of them disabled, but

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all covered with glory. Great was the rejoicing over that brilliant victory, and loud the lamentations of those who had not contributed to achieve it. But I am very sure that the second battalion of the 27th had no business whatever to swell the list of mourners; for it was not till after we had inhabited the Calvera barracks a few days, and passed from them into the town, that arms were put into our hands, and we ourselves were partially instructed in the first elements of drill. What could such a rabble as we have accomplished, in the presence of the very *élite* of the French army? Still our heroes, like the rest, were loud in the reproaches which they heaped on adverse winds, and lazy agents, and foul weather; and I dare say, that with them there was quite as much sincerity of purpose, as if they had already been what they afterwards became, a very efficient corps.

I was a good looking youth in those days, and while we lingered in Malta, a lady, Mrs. Tuthill, who came out to join her husband in our first battalion, would needs have me as a servant. I went to her accordingly; but domestic employment was never my passion while I wore the King's uniform, so the arms were no sooner issued out, than I quitted my mistress, and returned to my duty. And here I cannot fail to remark upon the extraordinary facility with which the second battalion of the 27th appeared to be brought into service-order. If I except a few short drills with the firelock in the barrack-room, and a day or two at our facings under

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one of the sergeants in the open air, we were positively subjected to nothing more than the parades that are customary with old regiments; and yet I should do the corps injustice if I were to say that, when brigaded with others, it exhibited the slightest symptoms of inferiority. But this state of things was not destined to continue, as I shall have occasion to explain by and by.

The town barracks in Messina adjoin to a large convent, of which, indeed, they form a portion. In point of size they are sufficiently commodious; but while in occupation of them we were subjected to certain inconveniences, which annoyed us a good deal at the moment, and of which the recollection is not pleasant. I say nothing of the clerical jingling of bells which day and night disturbed our slumbers. But the system of burial there was exceedingly offensive, and we, though as seldom as might be eye-witnesses to the ceremony, were seldom exempt from its influence upon another of the senses. In Sicily, generally, in Messina always, the corpse is carried upon a bier into the chapel of the convent, and laid out, face upwards, while the priests chaunt their masses over it. This done, a trap-door is lifted in the paved flooring of the church, and the body, not enclosed in a coffin, nor even wrapped round with a sheet, is thrown in, to putrify and decay, beside the multitudes who, in every imaginable stage of decomposition, might have gone thither before it. The consequence is, that from these horrid charnel-

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houses such an effluvia is constantly emitted, that not the chapel only, but all the buildings near are infected by it; and thus, to us who had never been accustomed to anything of the sort before, the atmosphere proved worse than offensive—it was positively deleterious.

There occurred during this summer of 1806 only one event of which it is worth while to take notice—I allude to the abortive expedition which carried a British force for the second time over the narrow sea to the mainland of Italy. I never heard what was the real object of that landing, nor can I tell why it was not completed; all that I know concerning the matter is, that the larger portion of the disposable force in Sicily was concentrated for another embarkation in and around Messina; that we made good our landing without the slightest opposition having been offered to us; and that, marching the same night, and continuing our progress on the following day, we penetrated as far as Montigona. But here the operation ended: the French had skirmished a little with an advanced guard, and showed some columns in the distance, but with these latter we never came in contact; on the contrary, having halted till dusk, we retraced our steps towards the coast, and were all snug on board ship again within forty-eight hours of our first landing.

The fleet put back to Sicily, the troops were sent on shore, and our regiment marched to Castagno

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barracks, where we passed the winter. Miserable quarters we had of it enough, for the roof was covered over with tiles so indifferently plastered, that snow and rain made a breach through; and we could, when the sky was clear, look out from our berths, and see, here and there, the stars shining over us. The results were not favourable to the health of the men; and I, among others, caught the ague: but before it came to this, I was witness to a little scene which, as it amused me at the moment, I may as well describe. There was a man in our battalion, called Quin, a strange, blunt, *outré* fellow, considerably past the prime of life, yet strong enough for anything, and a good soldier. He was remarkable among us for various eccentricities,—as, for example, nobody had ever seen him undress; nobody could tell how he kept his firelock in such excellent order, inasmuch as he never removed the barrel from the stock to clean it; and nobody could ever charge him with the most remote approximation to unfair dealing. He was by no means unsocial; on the contrary, he seemed to relish the discussing of a flask of wine with a comrade, and seldom refused to do so; but his rule was invariably this:—

"How many flasks do you mean to have?"

If the answer was one, and no more, then he produced half the cost; if the matter were left in doubt, he thus arranged it:—

"See, I shall pay for the first flask, and you for the second; and then, if more be wanted, we'll lay

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down penny for penny. I am not going to play at two to one any more. I have generally found, after the third flask was gone, that nobody had money to pay for a fourth, except myself."

But this was not all. Quin very seldom laid himself open to the risk of being found fault with; but accidents will happen to the most cautious, and he, as well as others, was sometimes caught napping, and came in for a reproof.

"You have nothing to say to me at all," was his answer in such cases; "I am not a soldier — I don't belong to the 27th — I never got either the shilling or the bounty. You crimped me, and have no right to keep me."

And he spoke the truth; for he had served his time in the 50th, had the King's letter for a shilling a day, and was actually a tide-waiter somewhere in Ireland, when a party entrapped him, and carried him off. Moreover, he had refused, when his senses returned, to accept either the shilling or the bounty. Such was Quin — a curious old fellow, whom everybody liked, though most of us laughed at him. It is of him that I have my little story to tell.

Towards the beginning of the cold season, General Waghup came to Castagno to inspect us. He rode down the line, and, observing Quin in the ranks, he said:—

"I know you: I am sure that I have seen you before."

"To be sure you have," replied Quin: "I know

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you, likewise, and I shall have something to say to you when this is over."

Accordingly, when the parade was dismissed, Quin, being called to the front, stepped out, and reminded the General that he had served in the 50th Regiment when it was under his orders. Then followed an explanation of the circumstances under which he had again put on uniform, and a sort of demand that the General would see him righted. The General laughed, and desired him to return to his quarters; but the very same day there came a car, which transported our eccentric comrade to Messina, where his bounty was paid to the last farthing, and himself sent home by the first ship, and restored to his place as a tide-waiter.

Early in the spring of 1807 the regiment returned to Messina, where a circumstance befell which in some sort gave a new character to the order of our existence. We had come out from England under the orders of Colonel Warren, the senior lieutenant-colonel of the regiment, who, not greatly relishing the labour which a corps of recruits almost always occasions, had given us over to Colonel Smith, and gone himself to the first battalion; but the first battalion proved to be as little satisfactory as possible, inasmuch as it was composed, almost entirely, of worn-out and drunken old men, whom a long service in India and Egypt had spared. Colonel Warren, therefore, by some extraordinary piece of management, got an order from the Horse Guards to amal-

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gamate the battalions together; in other words, to pick out all the best men, whom Colonel Smith had with exceeding care trained and disciplined: and, transferring them to his own battalion, to fill up their places with his outcasts. Never, surely, has such a change been wrought, both in the morale and the physique of a regiment, as was by this arrangement effected among us. From one of the nicest corps that ever was handled, we degenerated in one day into the merest rabble, to encounter which, far less to mould it into form, Colonel Smith had no temper. He declared that he would never look upon the regiment again. The consequence was, that he applied for leave of absence, and returned to England in disgust, leaving us to the tender mercies of Major Carlton, one of the most rigid disciplinarians and unsparing dispensers of the lash that ever held rank in the British army.

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CHAPTER IV.

HOW TO DEAL WITH A DISHONEST QUARTER-MASTER. — OPERATIONS BY SEA AND LAND.

THE breaking up in the second battalion of the 27th was complete. From each company, forty or forty-five of the best men were drafted away; and with them went non-commissioned officers of every degree, not excepting even the pay-sergeants. Extreme confusion could not fail to ensue, and men, every way unfit to be trusted, were forced into responsible situations. In my own company, for example, (for I being still a boy, was not removed to the first battalion,) a person of the name of Peacock, a Scotchman, and a corporal, became pay-sergeant at once, and a most implacable enemy of mine he on all occasions proved himself. He was married. His wife was certainly not the most respectable of her sex; indeed, she had been more than once confined to barracks because of discreditable situations into which she threw herself; and I, with the thoughtlessness of extreme youth, had repeatedly laughed at both her and her husband. So long as he continued a corporal, Peacock had it little in his power

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to annoy me: as pay-sergeant his authority became greater, and he wielded it not to my benefit. I believe that it was to him I owed the difficulties that were thrown in the way of my promotion, after I had been recommended over and over again by my officers. But my case, though hard enough, was no hardship at all when compared with some others; of one of which I may as well make mention.

There was in the regiment, a man called Crawford, an exceedingly brave and good soldier, who might, perhaps, run at times into trifling irregularities, but against whom no serious charge had ever been brought: this man, like myself, became somehow or other, an object of rancorous hatred to one of the people whom the drafting of the battalion had pushed into undue honour, and accident gave to his enemy an opportunity of indulging his spleen, which, I have great cause to be thankful, accident never gave to mine. Sergeant Hollewell, the pay-sergeant of his company, found, one day, that Crawford's musket was loaded; and, as no just reason could be assigned for the circumstance, he came to the conclusion that Crawford had a plot upon his life. He made his report accordingly to the commanding officer, and Crawford was put in irons. A general court-martial was then applied for; but General Green (for the circumstance occurred at Malta) would not grant one; first, because he was doubtful whether the charge could be brought home against the accused; and next, because, even if convicted, he

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would be liable only to transportation. Upon this a regimental court-martial sat, and Crawford, to the astonishment of all but the officers composing it, was found guilty. The sentence was a tremendous one, a thousand lashes, and to a blow it was inflicted under the burning rays of a Maltese sun, falling all upon the sufferer's head; indeed, the last five hundred his head lay upon his shoulder, and he seemed to have no power even to wince under the blows that were struck. But Crawford was a most determined fellow. Though the major had desired that a stretcher should be in attendance, and when the poor fellow was taken down, commanded him to take advantage of it, he would not accept the favour.

"I want no more than a soldier is entitled to," was his answer. "Give me the assistance of two of my comrades, and I will *walk* to the hospital."

He got the assistance which he required, and he did walk, ay, and he recovered, and was just as much respected in the regiment as ever. But the matter did not end here.

Long after this, when we were quartered at Barcelona, to which place the course of my narrative will by and by conduct us, Crawford's blanket was missing. He said that it must have been stolen from him; Sergeant Hollewell declared that he had sold it; and he was tried and found guilty, and received again four hundred lashes. He was yet in hospital, when the identical blanket made its appearance, in Sergeant Hollewell's own arm-chest. Of

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course, there was a good deal of murmuring, though nobody spoke out; and Sergeant Hollewell saw that no eye looked upon him with a friendly stare. Even he, hardened as he was, could not stand it. He put the muzzle of his own firelock under his chin, and endeavoured to destroy himself. But the scoundrel who had courage enough to persecute an innocent man, was not possessed of sufficient nerve to accomplish an object like that. The ball took a slanting direction, broke his jaw-bone, and came out beside the ear. I have always thought that the commanding officer did wrong, when, in order to save, as was stated, the honour of the regiment, he sent such a man home among those wounded by the enemy, instead of denouncing him, as he ought to have been denounced on the instant. Yet Providence would not allow the crime to be hidden: Hollewell recovered; he since 'listed in some foreign corps, I think, in the York Rangers, to complete his term of service, and was not discharged till the conclusion of the war, in 1814: and it so happened that on the very day when he appeared before the board at Kilmainham, to claim his pension, Colonel Warren was there. The colonel could not sanction such a fraud upon the country, as the pensioning of the miscreant would have been. He stated to the commissioners under what circumstances the wound was received, and Hollewell went away empty handed. But I must return to my narrative.

The best men of the second battalion having been

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removed to the first, and their places supplied by the very scum and refuse of the army, we were put on board of ship, and sent to Malta, where, for more than two years, we did garrison duty. A dull enough time we had of it; for the routine of garrison duty soon grows irksome; and our commanding officer, though just to the letter, took care that we should have as few opportunities as might be of relieving its tedium. Yet he was occasionally the source of considerable amusement to those whom he governed. I may as well give a specimen of his pleasantries. There was issued out to us, soon after our arrival at La Valette, new clothing, to render which as attractive as possible, Major Carlton caused a memorandum to be inserted in the orderly book, that great care should be taken to furnish the tailors with the best species of buttons. Our quarter-master, however, by name Daly, an Irishman, of course, who had risen from the ranks, paid much more regard to his own profits than to the appearance of the regiment; so he issued out buttons on most of which you might expend any given degree of labour without being able to boast that they bore testimony to your zeal. When we stood on parade, therefore, for the first time, Major Carlton expressed himself very little pleased with our appearance; and calling to the adjutant desired to be informed why the men's buttons looked so dingy. The adjutant knew well enough; but he and Daly had been comrades of old, and not being willing to make a report which

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might tell against the quarter-master, he answered evasively, and upon this, the major called one of us to the front.

"What is the meaning of this?" said he; "why are your buttons so dull?"

"Because they are almost all made of lead," was the reply; "and the more you rub them, the darker they grow."

"Mr. Taylor," continued the major, turning to the adjutant, "did not I direct that the very best pewter buttons should be issued to the men?"

"Yes, sir," answered the adjutant.

"And is there not another order that each man shall carry about with him a clasp-knife?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, then, out knives, men, let me see that this order, at least, has been obeyed."

We felt in our pockets; but the jackets being all new, not one in six had his knife about him, on which the major exclaimed—,

"Your new clothing has saved you for once; I will not regard this as disobedience of orders; but, away to your quarters, men; and let me see you all here again in five minutes, with your knives."

We broke our ranks at once, and hurrying back to the barracks, seized our knives, and fell in again.

"Now, then, draw knives."

So we did, after which, the word was given to form threes, and we were marched under the gateway down to the beach, and there halted. To wheel

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into line facing the sea was the next manœuvre; and there something occurred which convulsed us with laughter.

"Down upon the ground, men; cut off the buttons from your gaiters, and throw them into the sea. Take care of the cloth, but don't leave a button unsevered."

Amid the most vociferous laughter, we set to work; and in five minutes, there was not a button left on any gaiter throughout the regiment.

"Now, Mr. Daly," said the major, as the bits of lead flew in showers into the water, "I hope this will cost you fifty pounds, and make you a hundred pounds the more honest."

Poor Daly looked aghast; but the joke was all against him.

It was a pity that Major Carlton should have fallen into the vulgar error of imagining that discipline is not to be kept up in a corps, except by extreme severity. I am sure that he meant on all occasions to do his duty; I know that a fairer commandant never was at the head of a regiment, for he would not allow an officer to employ a private on his own personal business without paying him for it. But his punishments were too frequent, and they were always mercilessly severe, and rendered him in consequence, the reverse of popular in the battalion. The arrival of Colonel Reeves to supersede him, which occurred soon after the affair of the buttons, was accordingly hailed as a subject of

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great rejoicing. Nevertheless, we were becoming very tired of the state of inactivity to which we seemed fated; when in May 1809, an order was given, that we should prepare for immediate embarkation. It is astonishing what an effect an order like this produces, under almost all circumstances, on men's minds. We were not told whither we were going, we had heard of no warlike expedition as contemplated; yet, the bare idea of change delighted us, and we went on board of ship, in the highest possible spirits. Neither the feeling, nor the cause which produced it, was destined to be of long continuance. A beautiful breeze wafted us out of the harbour; and as it blew right astern, we set every stitch of canvass in order to make the most of it; but we had not proceeded above six leagues on our voyage, ere the captain's practised eye discovered that danger was at hand. I need not say that the white squalls of the Mediterranean are as perilous and as sudden in their bursts as the tornadoes of a warmer climate. To day, for example, a slight curl on the surface of the water, with a cloud in the horizon, "no bigger than a man's hand," were the only indications which we could discover of a change of weather; yet the sails were but partially got in when the hurricane came, and such as still spread their surface to the gale, were split into ribbons. Then followed a scene which the imagination must represent for itself, inasmuch as no power of language could do it justice. The vessel was crowded

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with people; she reeled and rocked as if she would have gone gunwale under: sickness prevailed to an extent which I never witnessed before or since, and the amount of individual suffering was fearful. When we got at last, and we did not accomplish the matter without extreme difficulty, under shelter of the rocky coast of Sicily, and into smooth water, two men were found dead in the jolly-boat; nor could the circumstance be otherwise accounted for than by assuming that the severity of sea-sickness had exhausted constitutions naturally feeble, and destroyed them.

We came to anchor off Messina at an early hour in the morning, and were immediately landed. Feeble the men were, from the combined effects of confinement and positive starvation; yet was the column of march formed without delay, and we took the road forthwith to Spada Novo. Now, if we had been as fresh as we were the reverse, the march from Messina to Spada Novo would have been a severe one; for the points lie full seven-and-twenty miles apart, and the road is in many places indifferent. As it was, our people dropped down from sheer exhaustion by whole sections. Even I, who was then as capable of sustaining fatigue as most men, found it extremely difficult to keep up; indeed, if the journey had been prolonged but a very few miles further, I must have yielded to the pressure, and followed their example. By dint of great exertion, however, and at the cost of much suffering, I managed, with

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about half the battalion, to reach our destination, where we found ourselves incorporated with the great bulk of the Sicilian army, and put under canvass. The fact is that a fresh outbreak was at this time contemplated, not with the view of attempting any serious conquests in Italy, nor yet under the idea that an insurrection might be stirred up; but for the purpose of operating a diversion in favour of the Austrians, between whom and France war had again arisen. Hence the formation on these plains of the extensive encampment into which we now found ourselves carried, and from which it was understood we were not to be moved till satisfactory dispositions should have been made for bringing us in contact with the enemy.

We lingered in this camp several weeks, during which frequent field-days occurred; and we, being practised to the formation of squares, were trained to withstand the charges of the 20th Light Dragoons. I make mention of the circumstance, because of a slight feeling of alienation which arose between us and the cavalry, and which at one time threatened to produce serious effects. Not content with riding close to our bayonets, the 20th used to amuse themselves and annoy us by cutting at our muskets with their swords, and striving to sever them. We bore the insult quietly enough the first time it was offered to us; the second time we were not so patient; and on a third attempt we had well nigh acted towards our countrymen as the commanding-officer told us

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we ought to act in case of an attack from the enemy. In a word, we loaded with ball-cartridges, and stood ready to make use of them. Happily for all concerned, the real state of things got wind, and the 20th were drawn off that day, without making any demonstration against the squares; neither was this species of sham fight, at least, at any future period, renewed.

The position of Spada Nova lies at a distance of, perhaps, three miles from Melazzo, whence a large portion of our supplies was drawn, and whither, as an indulgence, we were permitted occasionally to proceed. Every night, however, there went a piquet from the camp, which scoured the streets of the town, and brought back all stragglers whom they might find absent after tattoo from the lines. It happened, one evening, that an officer of ours had the piquet; and that a man of the 10th, having drunk a great deal too freely, not only refused to return to camp when ordered, but either struck or pushed the officer on the breast. Such an offence, committed in the presence of the guard of which he was in charge, the officer could not, of course, overlook; so he caused the man to be arrested, made his report in the morning of what had happened, and concluded, as was not unnatural, that the mutineer would come in for a sound flogging. He had totally overlooked the stern and positive language which the Articles of War make use of, in reference to this offence; and was therefore horrified when, next day, it became ap-

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parent to him that the man, if tried and found guilty, must of necessity be sentenced to death. He did not lose a moment in applying for leave to withdraw his charge, but it was refused him. I don't know why Sir John Stewart should have been so prodigal of the lives of his countrymen in Sicily; whether political motives had effect with him, which is not impossible, or that he acted, in all cases, on a sense of right in the abstract; but it is certain that the numbers put to death during the period of his command were very considerable; indeed, there was scarcely a height near any of the military stations which was not surmounted by a gibbet. These Lord William Bentinck, immediately on his arrival, caused to be removed; while at the same time he greatly curtailed the list of executions. But Lord William had not yet come at the period of which I am now speaking, and the unhappy soldier of the 10th paid dearly for his drunken folly. He was tried, found guilty, and condemned to be shot. It was to no purpose that the officer besought the General to commute the sentence even into transportation; it was in vain that, on the very day of the execution, he made a tender of his sword, and prayed for the prisoner's life. Nothing could move the commander-in-chief, and the condemned man underwent the punishment that had been awarded him. But the officer on whose account the blood of a fellow-creature had thus been spilt, never recovered the shock: he became sick on the instant; he could not go with us

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when we embarked, as was believed, for active service; he applied for and obtained permission to return to England, and we never saw him more. Whether he lived or died, I cannot say; but he never again did a day's duty with the regiment.

At last the hour so long and so ardently counted on arrived, and a formidable force of at least twelve thousand men went on board of a fleet equally formidable. The Warrior was there, the Grampus, the Belerophon, and many more, besides sloops, schooners, and gun-boats innumerable; while, with transports, store-ships, and other attendants on a mighty expedition, the whole surface of the sea appeared to be covered. We — that is, the persons of inferior station—expected an immediate descent somewhere, and the glories of a second Maida were confidently anticipated. But our chiefs had determined otherwise: from point to point, along the Italian coast, we moved, now running in by day, as if about to throw the troops on shore, now standing off at night, that we might show ourselves again in a threatening attitude somewhere else. I make no doubt that the object aimed at was at least partially obtained; for the whole sea-board was kept in a state of alarm, and we could see with our glasses columns everywhere on the move, as if to meet and repel the danger. But this sort of life became, at the termination of the sixth week, extremely irksome; therefore, greatly were we delighted when, one Sunday morning, as the islands of Ischia and Procida hove in sight, di-

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rections were given that each man should be provided with three days' provisions, and sixty rounds of ammunition.

"That's it, boys!" shouted Phil Corney, with a true Connaught brogue. "Now, boys, we'll have some fun. Sixty days' provisions, and three rounds of ammunition; that's yer sort!"

Phil was one of the best bull-makers that ever kept the table in a roar; and his parody on the regimental orderly-book was received, as may be imagined, with shouts of laughter.

Slowly and steadily the fleet neared the land, and keen and frequent were the glances with which those at the head of affairs swept the line of batteries that overhung the beach. By and by, up went the signal to anchor; and at the distance of perhaps five English miles from the nearest point of Ischia, the vessels, each as it gained its station, brought to. The remainder of the afternoon was spent in completing the necessary preparations — that is to say, the arms were got in order, ammunition was served out, and pork or salt beef boiled; while round the Admiral's ship orderlies from each of the transports gathered, in order that definitive instructions might be communicated, and the landing effected in good order. From the officers who went on that duty, we learned that the boats of the fleet were to assemble by rocket, astern of the Admiral, at two o'clock in the morning; and in the mean while, the men were advised to lie down and refresh themselves.

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There was little inclination among us to attend to the latter of these recommendations, more especially when, towards dusk, we observed the Warrior begin to get under weigh. Her canvass was set, but not heavily; and then, taking advantage of a light breeze, she moved with exceeding majesty onwards and onwards, till it seemed to us that scarcely a couple of miles could have divided her from the beach. The batteries on shore soon opened, but she regarded them not; on the contrary, her helm was put up, and she passed along with her broadside towards the land, as if the design of those on board had been merely to reconnoitre, till, having traversed the entire line, she wore, and came round again. But it was not in idle pageantry that she this time swept the coast: her guns opened in reply to those of the enemy, and terrible was the effect of the crashing broadsides which she threw in. Rampart and parapet alike crumbled beneath them; the stones were knocked from their places, and gun after gun disabled in its embrasure; till, by and by, there remained, of the formidable-looking works which had greeted us on our arrival, little else than a heap of ruins.

The Warrior did her work effectually, and it now remained for us to follow up the blow which she had struck; but we had some very serious, and extremely uncomfortable difficulties to surmount. When the ship's boats were got out, the painful truth was demonstrated to us, that a long exposure on the

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decks to the heat of the sun, had rendered them all unseaworthy. Through the gaping chinks the water made its way, even while they lay empty beside the transports; and when we began to descend into them, the effect of the increased weight was terrible. It has often since been a subject of astonishment to me that half of us were not drowned. In spite of incessant baling, to which operation shoes, caps, and every other available implement were applied, we could not reduce the water below the level of midleg as we sat; and if by chance we grew indolent in our work for a moment, it rose to the height of the thwarts, and brought the gunwales to the surface. I must admit, however, that from the rude jokes that were bandied about, it would have been a hard matter to guess that we really believed ourselves to be in danger. Boats, the sea, all sailors, and especially ships' captains and carpenters came in, to be sure, for numerous maledictions; yet, there was much more of laughter all the while than of complaining; and when at last the rocket went up, and the seamen bent on their oars, good humour became universally restored.

We collected in rear of the flag-ship, according to orders, and pulled for the beach. No enemy was there to resist us; indeed, the garrison of the island consisted of but one battalion, and the very skirmishers retreated into the woods from the fire of the shipping. Then followed the landing of cannon, and the erection of batteries against the citadel, an

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old baronial-looking pile, which crowned the ridge of a mountain, at least a thousand feet high. Such places, however formidable in the olden time, are seldom capable of withstanding the progress of modern hostilities, and the castle of Ischia proved no exception to the general rule. A couple of days' bombardment rendered it too hot for its inhabitants, and the governor surrendered at discretion. To take possession,—to make prisoners of the garrison,—to transfer several chests full of specie, which were found in the place, to the fleet, was all in the ordinary routine of business; yet a trifling innovation on the usages of war did occur, of which I am bound to make mention. The French governor had a remarkably pretty young wife; and as ladies are not wont to follow their husbands into captivity, some excuse, it was conceived, must needs be devised, in order to avert the necessity of dismissing her. Accordingly our tailors were set to work, and a page's dress being prepared for her, she continued to be her husband's companion, walking about in her pretty jacket and trowsers, and having her dark ringlets gathered up and arranged beneath an ordinary round hat.

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CHAPTER V.

THERE ARE TYRANTS IN ALL RANKS, AND JUST MEN ALSO.—WE SEE A GOOD DEAL OF LIFE AFTER A FORM.

We remained in occupation of the islands of Ischia and Procida about a week, during which a little incident occurred, of which, because of the graver consequences to which it led, I may as well make mention. At the period of which I am speaking, a custom prevailed in the men's barracks, which rendered it in some sort necessary for each person, on joining a regiment, to fight himself into the respect of his comrades. Like overgrown schoolboys, which in some sort they are, soldiers take too much pleasure in teasing and annoying one another, and till you have caused yourself to be respected, by showing a disposition to revenge insults when they go beyond the bounds of moderation, there is no peace for you. I had had my share of these encounters, and came out of them, sometimes victorious, sometimes the reverse; and young as I was, my comrades had learned to behave well to me; when, one day being on guard at the gate of the citadel, I became involv-

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ed in a new quarrel, which was certainly not of my seeking.

It so happened that an officer of the 20th dragoons rode up to look at the castle; and as horses were not permitted to go over the drawbridge, he left his in keeping of the guard. When he came forth again, he gave us a Spanish dollar to drink, and we cast lots to determine on which should devolve the duty of descending to the town, and procuring the wine. The lot fell on a man of my company, called Haly, who went away, leaving his tobacco-pouch loose on his knapsack. I am sure I cannot tell why I took it up; I believe that I did so in order to hinder it from being mislaid; but, however this may be, Haly on his return, missed it, and charged his uncle, likewise in our company and called by the same name as himself, with having stolen it. The uncle denied the charge; upon which Haly became violently abusive, and made use of language such as did him no credit, particularly when applied to so near a relative. I was not in the guard-room when the altercation began; but just at this moment I entered, and having inquired into the cause of the quarrel, I said quietly to Haly,

"You are entirely in the wrong; your uncle has not taken the tobacco-pouch."

This was quite enough. He turned fiercely upon me, covered me with abuse, and declared that if I spoke another word, he would serve me out. I could

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not stand this, so I threw off my accoutrements and jacket, and to work we went. We had a tough fight of it, for we were pretty equally matched; but in the end I proved the better man. Haly got a sound threshing, and he never forgave it. At the same time, I am bound to add, that in point of suffering, I had at least as much to complain of as he; for one of the last blows which I struck, fell upon his hard forehead, and my hand was so bruised and lacerated by it, that a full fortnight elapsed ere I was able to use it.

I thought no more of the fight after it was ended. I gave him his tobacco-pouch, indeed, and showed him that from the first he had been in error; but I never dreamed of harbouring malice against him, nor supposed that he would encourage any malicious sentiments towards me. I was mistaken in this, and in due time discovered my mistake. He always kept aloof from me; he never spoke of me to others, except with a grudge; he seemed anxious to get me by any means into a scrape. My comrades told me of this; but I would scarcely believe them, and when the truth was brought home, I defied him to do his worst. From that time forth we were as little as possible in each other's company, and no interchange of friendly offices took place between us.

Having kept the islands about ten days, the General made up his mind to withdraw from them; and that the enemy might recover them in a state as little profitable as possible, he caused all the fortifications

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to be demolished. Our occupation, accordingly, was to mine the earthen walls, and roll such of the cannon and shot as it was deemed unnecessary to remove, into the sea. Then followed the firing of trains, the blowing-up of bastions, and, last of all, the re-embarkation of the parties to whom the management of these matters had been intrusted; and then away, with a gentle breeze, we knew not whither, the fleet steered its course. But there was no more active service, nor even the semblance of it, at that time prepared for us. We steered for Melazzo Bay, whence, without halting to refresh, we began our march to the twin stations of Barcelona and Pozzo de Gotsa.

The places in question lie about seven miles inland from the beach, and are situated on the crests of two neighbouring hills, with a valley between them. It may seem strange that, in the effort to compass this space, the regiment should have endured great sufferings, yet the case was so; for the summer was at its height—there was no water to be found—and persons enfeebled by long confinement on board ship are not in a condition to face and surmount such hardships. Two men actually dropped, and died, on the line of march. Nevertheless, we gained our quarters at last; and the regiment, being divided, one half took possession of the cantonments at Barcelona, while the other found accommodation in Pozzo de Gotsa. It was my fortune to be stationed at the latter of these posts, where, also, my vindic-

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tive enemy did duty; and there, on two separate occasions, I found myself suffering wrong — once, without doubt — on both occasions, I verily believe — through the instrumentality of Haly.

While we lay in Pozzo de Gotsa, Haly's uncle died, and was buried. I did not attend his funeral; for, with six others, under the command of a corporal, I was that day on the barrack-guard — a sort of duty which made us responsible for everything that the barracks contained, whether moveable or otherwise. I need scarcely state that, when a soldier dies in quarters, an account is taken, after he shall have been buried, of his arms, accoutrements, and clothing, all of which are handed over to the quartermaster, and put into store. When the state of the elder Haly's affairs came to be inquired into, his belts, and pouch, and bayonet were missing; and not by all the search which we instituted through the building, could they be discovered. To this day I believe that the dead man's nephew stole these articles, and that his design was to get me into a scrape; but however this may be, it is very certain that both I and my companions on duty became the sufferers. We had then as our captain a singularly stupid fellow, who never went by any other name than Blind Harry Pepper — a queer, squinting, sidling creature, who was no more fit to have the command of men than to make a steam-engine, or guide it when made for him. Now, Blind Harry was very wroth at the loss of the accoutrements, which he, according

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to the customs of the service, must make good; and not considering that his legitimate course was to make a report of the circumstance, he ordered the whole guard to be confined to barracks, and marched every morning to the sea-side, where we were made to drink each of us a pint of salt water.

There is nothing so galling to the tempers and health of men as frivolous, and teasing, and degrading punishments, such as this. We bore it for a week without complaining; but when the thing went on, murmurs began to escape us, and we hazarded an opinion, both among ourselves and elsewhere, that the colonel knew nothing about it. Still, the difficulty was, how to reach him; for the lieutenant of the company would not, or could not carry our complaint except through the captain, and the captain was not the sort of man to become agent in his own mortification. And so the days passed, and for a full fortnight we continued to be prisoners in our barrack-rooms, except during the hours which were spent in marching to the sea, drinking the salt water, and marching back again. At last I mustered up courage; and, one evening on parade, I recovered my arms, and said to Colonel Reeves, that I had a complaint to make to him.

"What is it, what is it?" said he, speaking fast, as he always did.

I told him, on which he gave me a sort of benediction, added that he knew nothing about the matter, and desired me to return to the ranks. Yet

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our object was gained: we saw Captain Pepper called to the front — observed by the colonel's manner that he was not praising him — could not overhear a word that was spoken — but were the same night relieved from arrest. So much for one injury, which to this hour I believe is to be traced back to the twofold knavery of my friend Haly.

The next was more serious. After lingering at Pozzo de Gotsa some time, we received the route for Melazzo, and were to set out at an early hour on the morning after it came. There was a practice then, which I believe holds generally to this day, of confining men to their barrack-rooms throughout the night that is to usher in a move, for the purpose, I need scarcely add, of providing that all shall be present when the drum beats, and the early parade is formed. A bayonet sentry is, in consequence, placed over the door of each room, with orders to permit ingress freely, but not to allow any one to pass abroad after some given hour. I had obtained permission that night to visit my brother, whose company chanced to lie at Barcelona; and I came back, after night-fall, and made at once for my berth. Haly was on duty over the door, and though he made way for me to pass, I felt immediately that he had stabbed me behind. I hope that he was not so utterly depraved as to aim at my life, I am willing to believe that his object was only to strike with the hilt of the bayonet; but that the weapon turning in his hand, he gave point by accident. Be this, however, as it may,

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the bayonet entered above my shoulder, and pierced downwards along the back. I grew very faint: I did not bleed much externally, but a sense of suffocation came over me; and I am sure that if the surgeon had not used his lancet in time, my career would have been cut short with a vengeance. As it was they took every possible care of me, and I recovered. With respect to Haly, he was brought, as he deserved, to a court-martial, and my evidence was taken against him, which, however, I managed so to deliver, that of the capital charge he was immediately acquitted. But the whole history of our disagreement came out, and a malicious intention was brought home to him. He received four hundred lashes, and I am humbly of opinion that he deserved them.

The battalion remained at Melazzo on this occasion an entire year, during some portion of which I continued an inmate of the hospital. My wound was a very troublesome one; for a bayonet is an awkward weapon from which to receive a hurt, and the proximity of the spine is a delicate portion of the body to be injured. I recovered, however, at last, and returned to my duty; but a new source of annoyance awaited me there. A love of dress — from which I cannot say that to this hour I am quite delivered — and a disinclination to lack anything that contributes to a soldier's comforts, had thrown me into debt with my captain; and debt is never an agreeable burthen to any man, and least of all to a soldier. I

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was, therefore, content to accept, after a time, the situation of cook to the company — an office certainly not in itself desirable, particularly to a person of my habits; but as the allowance per head was fourpence monthly, and there were ninety-seven men in the company, it was acceptable, as holding out the sure prospect of a speedy deliverance from my embarrassments. I think that I acted in this capacity about four months, at the termination of which, having wiped out all the balance against me, I gave up the control of the kitchen and its utensils, and took my original place in the ranks.

I cannot recall to my remembrance more than one event as deserving, throughout this extended period, to be had in remembrance. Our lives, in general, were things of mere routine, implying parades, field-days, guard-mountings, and so forth; but there was no excitement in them — no novelty — nothing to look back upon which causes the old man's blood to tingle, or the feelings of youth to be revived in him. Once, however, and once only, we were put upon our mettle. The midnight reliefs had gone round — the lights in the barracks were all extinguished — both in the citadel which we occupied, and among the tents on the plain where the 62nd regiment lay, perfect silence prevailed, when all at once a cry was raised, by the sentry on the look-out bastion, that the beacons on all the hills, from Messina onwards, were blazing. In a moment the alarm spread: the bugles sounded, the drums beat; men

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sprang from their beds, dressed and accoutred with all haste; and, amid hurried orders to fall in, we ran as fast as we could to our respective stations on the parade-ground. Meanwhile, the gates of the Castle were shut, and the draw-bridge raised; while a tar-barrel, which was kept in readiness on the loftiest pinnacle of the battlements, was ignited, and sent on the signal of alarm to more distant quarters. Then came the inquiry, passed hurriedly from one to another, what was to be done; for we could perceive, by the flitting of lights to and fro, that in the cantonments of the 62nd there was commotion also. But the question was more easily put than answered. No definite instructions appeared to have been given, at least none were acted upon, further than that, standing beside our arms, we watched the beacon-fires fade away and die out, and prepared to obey whatever orders might from head-quarters be forwarded.

Thus the night wore on, and the morning came, without, however, bringing any intelligence along with it; so that, still keeping our accoutrements on, and leaving our arms piled in the great square, we were permitted to fall out and cook and eat our breakfasts. This done, we returned to our places, and kept on the alert till noon, when a messenger arrived from Messina, and the cause of the late alarm was explained to us. The enemy, it appeared, had really attempted a landing. They had put to sea from their own coast, with about five thousand men, but falling

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into the currents, which off the coast of Messina run with exceeding violence, their flotilla became scattered and divided. A few boats only reached the shore, somewhere between Messina and the Faro battery: the remainder were swept away round the Corregio Point, and with great difficulty escaped destruction. But the numbers which landed were quite incapable of effecting anything: they could not regain their boats; they were threatened on all sides by our troops; they fled to the mountains, and were there slain or made prisoners by the brigands. And so all the tar-barrels and furze bushes which had been collected with so much care on a hundred different heights were consumed to no purpose. Such was the abortive issue of the single alarm of invasion which, throughout the whole of my sojourn in Sicily, occurred to startle us, and such the only circumstance which at this distance of time, appears to me to have given anything like interest to the common-place occurrences amid which one whole year of life passed away.

The little excitement to which this burst gave rise, had not yet entirely subsided, when we received orders to give over the citadel to the 62nd, and to proceed to Messina. Our march was toilsome, for we performed it by night, and it was more than usually tedious; because, instead of following the direct route, we penetrated through the mountains, often in single files, and formed an obtuse angle, by taking Remella as a resting-place on the way. But I

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have nothing to relate concerning it. In like manner, my history of the next year and a half must be given very much at random, inasmuch as materials for a diary are wanting, were it probable, which it is not, that such a diary as mine could interest anybody besides myself. Let me, then, be content to relate a few anecdotes, from which, more correctly than from a longer tale, an idea will probably be formed of the course of a soldier's life in Sicily.

I need hardly state, that at the period of which I am speaking, the coasts of Calabria were crowded with French troops, and that Murat either meditated, or affected to meditate a descent, from day to day, upon our shores. To resist this, when it should happen, we were continually on the alert. Every height by which the sea-line was overlooked, gave support to a battery; on the low grounds, and as near to high-water mark as was considered safe, mortars were imbedded, while along the line from Messina to Gonzero, a force of not less than fifteen or sixteen thousand men occupied cantonments. By them piquets were furnished, which day and night patrolled the beach; four men penetrating to the right, four to the left, and so meeting one another that not even a solitary boat could put into or go out from the island undetected. Meanwhile there was a constant firing maintained across the channel, in which we, I must say, were never the aggressors, though when it did begin, we never failed to enter into the amusement heartily. As I

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was one of those whom the commandant directed for training in the batteries, and doing the duty of a gunner, I can speak with certainty of the system on which both sides acted; and the following may be taken as a true account of the matter.

The Faro of Messina, as the strait between it and Calabria is called, is subject to two distinct currents, which sweep with extreme violence along the opposite shores, and leave the mid-channel to the ordinary influence of wind and tide. The currents, moreover, set in opposite directions, that is to say, when the sweep on our side was from east to west, that along the Calabrian shore ran from west to east, so that a vessel striving to cross, would be carried by the former in one direction out of her way; by the latter, in another direction back again to her original line. The French, aware of this circumstance, used to fire upon every vessel which, keeping the mid-channel, endeavoured to pass through the narrows, and not unfrequently drove it into one or other of the currents, by which the difficulties of navigation were increased four-fold. It was our custom never to discharge a gun till their batteries opened; but when they did open, we invariably replied to them, sometimes with excellent effect. For though the channel must be full three miles across, we came by means of the plumb-line to take our aim so accurately, that we rarely failed of sending both shot and shells, with wonderful precision to the point desired. As a specimen of our skill in gunnery, take the following.

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I was present, as usual, one Sunday morning in a six-gun battery, which stood near the beach, and Lieutenant Bloomfield of the artillery, who was afterwards killed in the same place, was among us. We saw a felucca making her way up channel slowly and against the tide, and we counted, as a matter of course, on the salutation which awaited her, so soon as she should arrive within range of the enemy's guns. But this was not all that we observed: two battalions of French infantry came down the face of the hill, and marched into a chapel, which immediately fronted us, doubtless for the purpose of hearing mass.

"If they molest that felucca," said Mr. Bloomfield, "see if I don't pay them off. Lay your guns, men, for the chapel; and be very careful of your aim."

We attended to these instructions willingly; and for a quarter of an hour, perhaps, all was still.

On came the felucca, the wind being in her favour, but so light as scarcely to control the influence of the tide which flowed against her. She thus came in front of the French battery by degrees; and by so doing, as well as in consequence of the length of time that she lay exposed, she presented as fair a mark to the French gunners as they could have desired. Accordingly, one after another, their guns spoke out, and we saw the balls pass through her mainsail right across her bows, and one at last, crash among her rigging, bringing the main-boom down with a run, and rendering her quite unmanageable. The tide, accordingly took her, she was swept away,

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and the last that we saw of her was when, falling into the more remote of the two currents, she drove towards Corregio Point, when, without doubt, she must have grounded. And now it was our turn to play the game.

"Fire!" exclaimed Mr. Bloomfield, and fire we did, with such precision and effect, that the entire side of the chapel went in, and the building became in an instant a heap of ruins. I am sure that the slaughter inside must have been great; for the apparent consternation of the groups which hurried out, showed that all who had entered were not among them, and that they fled to escape the fate of their comrades.

It was not, however, by such operations as this that we did our best to bring, one upon the other, the calamities and evils of war. Both sides had flotillas of gun-boats in their harbours; and from time to time they would put to sea, and cannonade one another with great ferocity. Moreover, our people made repeated attacks on the town of Reggio, which they not only rendered too hot for the French troops to live in, but which they more than once sacked and set on fire. And as these expeditions took place invariably after night-fall, the effect of the noise and flashes of the guns was, as we experienced it, positively sublime. I suspect that the inhabitants of Reggio took a different view of the matter. I am quite sure that their very lives must have become in the end a burthen to them.

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When men are determined to accomplish some favourite object, it is astonishing how lightly they regard difficulties which to persons actuated by no such pressing impulse seem to be insurmountable. It was while this state of things was in progress, while our own coast was watched with a vigilance which could not be surpassed, and the narrow seas swarmed with cruisers, both ours and those sent forth by the enemy, that two men belonging to the 27th regiment made up their minds to desert. How it should have entered into their minds to contemplate such a thing, seems to be incomprehensible; by what means they hoped to accomplish it, I am about to tell. They knew that to get possession of a boat, and to launch it when procured, was quite out of the question; so, being excellent swimmers, they resolved to trust themselves, like Leander of old, to the mercy of the waves. They did so one dark night; and were brought back at a late hour on the following day, from the beach, about five miles below the Gonzero huts, whither the violence of the current had carried them, and where it threw them ashore. They were bad men, in every sense of the word: bad soldiers, bad characters, bad workmen — for, strange to say, both of them were tailors; and Colonel Reeves was, in consequence, very much annoyed that they had not succeeded in their purpose. But having them cast back upon his hands, he could not avoid putting them on their trial; and being found guilty, they were flogged.

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"I am going to punish you," said the colonel, when they were tied up, "not for deserting, but for allowing yourselves to be caught. Such fellows as you are not worth keeping at the best. I am sure you will be more than ever useless after your backs have been broken. So mind that you manage the thing better next time."

These words were not lost upon them: they took their punishment, they went into hospital, and coming out cured in due time, they deserted again. One of them was drowned in his effort to escape; but the other had the impudence to address a letter to Colonel Reeves, in which he informed him of his safe arrival in the French camp, and reminded him of the advice he had given.

"The —— scoundrel!" said Reeves, as he read the letter aloud on parade. "I am heartily glad we have got rid of him. He was a disgrace to the uniform he wore; he is only fit to put on that of the brigands to whom he has joined himself."

I have alluded to Colonel Reeves's notions concerning the effect of corporal punishment on a man's usefulness. It was his belief that a soldier once flogged never could come to good, and never did come to it. I am not prepared to give an opinion on the subject, but I am very sure that the less of flogging that goes on the better; and the state of discipline into which he got us, with an almost total exemption from the lash, serves to prove that, if proper care be taken, the lash need very seldom be ap-

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pealed to. Indeed, all my experience goes to prove that flogging is confined invariably to one narrow circle. You see the same man brought out, over and over, for punishment, as if, with the first that overtook him, all sense of self-respect had evaporated; and whenever you find a fresh member added by chance to the degraded band, you may put it down well nigh as an axiom, that he will never again escape out of it. Yet Colonel Reeves was a steady disciplinarian, too, and on all points of duty inexorable, as the following anecdote will prove:—

Wine is very cheap in Sicily; and wherever liquor is cheap and abundant, British soldiers, I am sorry to say, are too apt to indulge in it to excess. The practice, indeed, grew at one time so common, that even Colonel Reeves lost patience, and told us one day on parade, that he would not stop our allowances, nor starve us, nor harass us by drills; but would flog the first man, were it his own brother, whom he should find drunk upon duty. We knew what to expect, and were, on the whole, pretty careful; but a slip was made at last, and an excellent man, a soldier of eight years' standing, whose habits were as much the reverse of intemperate as could be, had the misfortune to appear drunk one day when paraded for guard. There was no hiding the fact; so he was sent to the guard-house, tried, and sentenced to receive four hundred lashes. As a matter of course, the regiment assembled to witness the punishment, and the prisoner was brought out.

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"I am sorry," said the colonel, addressing the culprit, "that you have got yourself into this scrape. Your former character is irreproachable. You are one of the last men in the regiment whom I could wish to degrade; but you have left me no alternative. You must strip, and take the consequences of your own lack of caution."

He did strip, and was tied up without speaking a word, and the drummers proceeded to do their duty. The colonel stood by, and three lashes were inflicted.

"Now," cried he, "take him down. I told you that if my own brother were guilty of this offence, he should be flogged. I have kept my word; but I could not continue to command you with any comfort to myself, were the back of so good a man injured for one offence, which will not, I am sure, in his case, be repeated. Go!" he continued to the prisoner; "I will not send you even to the hospital. Go, and take three days to recover from this disgrace."

The man went: he never got drunk again; and there was such a feeling in the colonel's favour, that I verily believe we should have done violence to anybody else who would have dared, at any future time, to come drunk for duty. Nay more: there sprang up among us a feeling of honour which, leaving us free to indulge when we believed that our day's work was done, rendered it positively disgraceful to be pointed out on guard or parade, or at drill, in any other

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state than becomes a soldier; and I remember an instance in which it operated even fatally. There was a Scotchman in the regiment, by name John, or, as we used to call him, Jock Dixon,—not a bad fellow in his way, but such a slave to habits of intemperance, that even the reproofs of his comrades could not hold him back from the indulgence. One day, when we were paraded in the interior of the fort, Jock made his appearance so drunk, that the sergeant of his squad, though willing to screen him as far as might be possible, could not shut his eyes to the man's condition. He reproved him sharply, ordered him to the guard-house, and appealed to the men whether they were not ashamed of such an associate. They all declared that they were. Upon this, Jock shouldered his firelock; and, under the pretence of withdrawing for a moment into privacy, made for one of the embrasures. Before anybody could overtake him, or interfere with the proceeding, he walked to its extremity, threw himself over into the ditch, and was killed upon the spot.

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CHAPTER VI.

WE STOP CONSPIRACIES IN SICILY, AND OPEN THE CAMPAIGN IN THE SOUTH OF SPAIN.

We continued in the lines, if so they deserve to be called, till Murat withdrew his forces from the opposite shore; and then our little army broke up into detachments, each of which repaired to a quarter more commodious than had heretofore been assigned to it. Our station was in a convent in the outskirts of Messina, whence we took the patrols, by which the shore was still guarded, through St. Andrew's Gate as far as the Grotto Battery. The duty was not onerous, neither did there occur in its discharge any incident of which it is worth while to take notice; but there are one or two events recorded in my memory as befalling at this time, which I am bound to mention, because at the moment they excited a good deal of speculation.

Among the intelligent officers attached to the army in Sicily, there was none whose name stood higher than Colonel Campbell, our Deputy Adjutant-General. He was famous for the extent and accuracy of the information which he at all times pos-

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sessed, in reference to the enemy's proceedings; and he became, in consequence, as he himself well knew, an object to Murat and his staff, of marked and especial abhorrence. It chanced, on a certain occasion, while we lay in the convent of which I have just spoken, that there arrived four strange monks, who, applying for a temporary lodging in a monastery which adjoined to Colonel Campbell's house, were by the Superior admitted, and had cells allotted to them. They were scarcely settled, when there came to Colonel Campbell's quarters Captain Oveadi, a well-known leader of a band of sbirri, or licensed spies,—a class of persons who, armed, appareled, and having, I suspect, the habits of brigands, prowled through the island, and made themselves masters of all secrets, as well as of the persons, of those whom they discovered to be in French pay, or disaffected to the government. Of Oveadi himself, I dare say that few who served in Sicily at the time can be forgetful. A singularly fierce-looking fellow he was, with a bold and free carriage, such as might well befit the leader of a band of robbers; whose dress was the jacket and sash, the breeches and long gaiters, the looped hat and feather; and his weapons a long gun and pistols, and daggers innumerable. This man, then, arrived at the Adjutant-General's quarters, within a few hours after the coming of the strange monks; and, being admitted, the two were closeted together for some time in an apartment, of which the door was bolted.

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Oveadi came forth at last; and as he was in the frequent practice of communicating confidentially with Colonel Campbell, no surprise was excited by his visit; neither did any consequences appear likely to result from it till after dusk, when a detachment of our regiment received sudden orders to get under arms. It was my fortune to be one of that detachment, which, being directed to prime and load, was conducted into the garden of the convent, into which the strangers had been received, and desired on no account whatever to permit anybody to pass. By and by, a loud knocking at the convent-gate roused the Superior, and he was desired to render up, without delay, the guests whom he had admitted. Great was the commotion in the convent: from every window lights began to glance, and in a few moments three of the strangers showed themselves above, as if in the act of reconnoitring.

"Stand fast, men, and be silent," was the word that was whispered to us.

We kept our places, and obeyed it; when presently down they leaped upon a soft bank of turf, and were by us instantly told to surrender. They endeavoured to rush past, upon which we fired. One had eleven balls through him, and died almost immediately; the other two fell desperately wounded; as to the third, he offered resistance to the party which burst into his cell, and was not without some difficulty mastered. And now came the elucidation of the mystery. They were not monks, but assassins

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hired to put Colonel Campbell to death, whom the vigilance of Oveadi had traced from their first arrival, and on whom papers were found which abundantly convicted them of the crime with which they were charged. They were tried and condemned to suffer, and a lofty gibbet was erected for the purpose, in a fiumara, or water-course, so situated that a full view of the whole proceeding might be obtained from the opposite shore. God help us! there is something very terrible in the extinction of human life, even in such cases as these. It was comparatively a trifle to see the uninjured man led forth, and strung up to the beam of the gallows; but the spectacle which his wounded companions exhibited, I am not likely ever to forget. They were covered with their own blood; they were all but insensible; the only words which they seemed capable of uttering expressed an earnest desire for water; yet in that state they were supported till the nooses had been passed round their necks, and then — their sufferings soon came to an end.

From the convent we were by and by moved into the citadel, where for some time we did duty with the 58th regiment, between which corps and ours so strong a friendship arose, that the men of the one were as much in the barracks of the other as in their own. In like manner, all duties, all parades, all field-days went off most satisfactorily when the two regiments acted together; and to speak slightingly of the one was a sure

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and ready means of calling forth the indignation of both. Yet we were not without our grievances at this time neither, of which the principal, as they were attributable to the misconduct of an individual, so, when that individual came to be rightly exposed, they ceased entirely.

The fort-major of Messina, was one Captain ——, Billy ——, as we called him; and a nice specimen of his class he was. Billy had been originally a pioneer in one of the regiments of guards, from which he passed as sergeant-major into a regiment of the line, where by some means or another he got an ensignсy, and rose till he attained the rank of captain. Many strange tales used to be told of his dealings with the shoemakers of his company, with which in this place I have no concern; but of his proceedings in the capacity of fort-major I am bound to make mention, because they are intimately connected with the design of this narrative.

Along the ramparts of the citadel of Messina there were, here and there, ammunition-boxes, or expanse magazines; to guard which was, of course, the business of the sentries within whose beat one or more might chance to be. Now, it so happened that Billy's house stood but a short space apart from one of these boxes; and the man being of a devilish disposition, he was in the habit of stealing out at night, abstracting a cartridge from the chest, and reporting the sentry for inattention to his duty, and getting him punished. What pleasure one man can

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derive from bringing punishment on the head of another, I cannot conceive; but such was Billy's mania, and it well nigh cost him dear in the end. He went forth one night according to usage, when a comrade of mine had the post, and crept up, imagining that no one noticed him, to the ammunition-chest. The sentry challenged, and he either did not hear or would not notice it; the challenge was repeated twice, and then the sentry fired. Fortunately for Billy, my comrade was not so good a shot as I am, so the ball merely passed through his hat, without hurting him. An angry man was Billy. He put the sentinel into confinement, made a report as if he himself had been wantonly shot at, and demanded that the assassin should be tried by a general court-martial. It happened at this time, that Sir John Stuart having returned home, General Sherbrook had the temporary command; and the charge being a grave one, the General caused the parties to appear personally before himself. It was proved by the testimony of the two adjoining sentinels, that Billy had been challenged three times. His wicked trick was explained, and General Sherbrook was left to act as he chose.

"Here, my man," said he to the prisoner; "here is a dollar for you. You are set at liberty, and I only regret that you had not been a better shot."

I believe that Billy's future career was quite in agreement with the specimen which I have just given. But I need not follow it over-strictly, inas-

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much as I had no individual connection with it whatever.

I come now to an occurrence in my own personal career, which was to me of some importance, and which, if I had not been the object of the pay-sergeant's rancour, would, there is reason to believe, have occurred at an earlier period. I allude to my promotion, for which I had often been recommended, but of which an influence, which was not secret from me, always contrived to hinder me. Blind Harry Pepper left the company about this time, and we got in his place Captain Windsor, as good and as kind a soldier as ever slept by the fire of a bivouac. He had not been three days with us, when he noticed me, and desired Sergeant Peacock to put me in the company's orders, as a lance corporal. The sergeant affected to misunderstand the order, and inserted my brother's name instead of mine; but my brother, who was an officer's servant, knew that he could not be meant; so, next day when we stood upon parade, there was no additional stripe on any man's arm. Captain Windsor called me to the front, and demanded a reason. I replied, that I had received no instructions, and refered him to the book, upon which he directed that, without loss of time, the badge should be appended to my jacket. It was done forthwith, and I felt on the instant, that from Sergeant Peacock's paltry malice I was delivered.

It was not, however, in this manner only that

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Captain Windsor evinced an inclination to repose confidence in me. One morning, he sent for me to his room, and told me that I must go to the fishermen's huts where the first battalion lay, and fetch back two hundred and fifty dollars, which a Jew sergeant, of the name of Lazarus, had agreed to lend him. Nor let it be supposed that, at the period of which I speak, this was a solitary instance of an officer borrowing money from a sergeant. There were then in the army numbers of persons who, having nothing to subsist upon but their pay, were for ever reduced to the last shifts, among which this was one. I cannot tell whence it came about that Captain Windsor's finances had fallen so low. I am cognisant only of the fact: and my business now was to procure the money, and to return with it in such secrecy as that the transaction should not be suspected by anybody else. I went as desired; got the money; and having being directed to return by water, I made for the sea-side: but the passage-boat had departed a few minutes ere my coming, and there remained for me no other course than to make the best of my way home on foot.

Between the citadel of Messina and the fishermen's huts there is a space of fourteen or fifteen long miles, and to travel it you must pass by a lonely and dangerous road, where the sea is on one hand, and a range of hills, bold and rocky, on the other. I confess that I did not feel by any means at my ease; because the peasants were not of the

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best repute in the world, and the booty about me was very tempting; nevertheless, it was necessary that I should go. I went accordingly, and considered myself particularly fortunate in finding that a sergeant of another corps—whether he had been engaged on a similar business or not, I cannot tell—was travelling in the same direction. We joined company of course, and we reached the point of our common destination, without having any danger to surmount, or attack to repel. I contrived, also, to put Captain Windsor in possession of his treasure unnoticed, and he gave me a dollar for my trouble. But the ground which I had thus won for myself in his good opinion, served only to strengthen against me the ill-will of the pay-sergeant; and as other means of annoyance were wanting, he and the sergeant-major together contrived to get me removed from the company. I was transferred, much against my own wish, as full corporal, to the light company, and served in it during the remainder of my time in the 27th regiment.

I must hurry over the residue of my Sicilian service, concerning which indeed I have little else to say, than that this portion of it was marked by the occurrence of many executions from among the foreign troops which had been amalgamated with our army. I think that mutiny had broken out among the Calabrians, the Chasseurs Britannique, and the royal Sicilian corps; at all events, I remember that for six weeks a general court-martial sat, and that

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at its rising, not fewer than two-and-twenty men were hanged. They did not all suffer in one day, for such a spectacle would have been too shocking; but eleven were executed first, then seven, and last of all four, in the sight of the assembled garrison. But better prospects than these were before us: in the beginning of 1812, it began to be noised abroad, that an expedition to the South of Spain was in contemplation; and in due time first one regiment, then another, were sent round to Palermo for embarkation. The second battalion of the 27th had not the good fortune, if such it deserve to be accounted, to form one in the first division. But we went with the second, and arrived consequently in time to witness all the fighting which distinguished the career of an army, which was one rather of observation than of enterprise. I must, therefore, tell my story in order, and from the beginning.

We performed our march to Palermo, which we reached in excellent order, and in the highest possible spirits. We expected to embark immediately; but in this we were disappointed; indeed, throughout three long months we occupied quarters in the city, the extreme beauty of which is not surpassed by anything of the sort which I have seen in Sicily. A pleasant time we had of it; for both money and provisions were abundant, and with the 81st regiment, which we found in quarters before us, we agreed well; but at last the ships made their appearance which were to transport us to the seat of war, and in every

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point of view delighted were we to enter them. It was my fortune, as a member of the light company, to be first on board the Bucephalus sloop-of-war, of which one Captain Flinn, an intimate friend of Colonel Reeves and an Irishman, was the commander; and a very agreeable, albeit, an extravagant passage we had, from which something like adventure was not absolutely excluded. In the first place, being the rear ship of the convoy, the commodore, Lord Cochrane, signaled us, when passing between Majorca and Sardinia, to look after two strange sail, that lay suspiciously in a bay of the latter. We bore down for them forthwith, and came so close, ere we made out that they were Algerines, that we could distinctly perceive their ports hauled up, and the muzzles of their guns run out for fighting. Now an eighteen gun brig was no match for a frigate and sloop, even though Algerines; and Captain Flinn, in consequence, put about with all haste, and strove to avoid them. They chased, but could not overtake us; indeed, our sailing was such, that long before sunset we ran them hull under; and when the dawn of the following day came in, not a vestige of them could be discovered. Away then we went once more upon our course, the fleet being entirely separated from us, and we had, throughout the day, no other prospect in view than the sky over-head, and the expanse of waters about us. But our risks were not yet over: in the middle of the night, the forecastle watch gave notice of a strange sail ahead;

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and ere the helm, could be put up, we were all but aboard of her. There was, doubtless, a bad look-out here. Something like confusion also followed; but Captain Flinn's voice was soon heard over all, giving orders that the men should stand to their quarters. Then followed a little manœuvring on both sides; for the stranger, though much larger than we, seemed to take a sort of wicked delight in placing herself towards us in a raking position; till at last Captain Flinn exclaimed in an angry tone,—

"Stand by there, men, to fire when I give the word!"

"You need not trouble yourself, Flinn," exclaimed an English voice from the stranger's poop; "we are the Melpomene frigate. We spoke your fleet yesterday, and have directions to send you straight to Alicante; but why don't you keep a better look-out a-head? Suppose we had been a Frenchman, or a Yankee?"

Captain Flinn did not greatly relish this joke, and both the officer and the watch came in for a hearty benediction. But to us soldiers he was uniformly kind; indeed, when we arrived at Alicante, and were put ashore on the beach, he besought Colonel Reeves that he would do him a particular favour.

"What is that?" asked the colonel.

"Only allow me to command the light company of the 27th for one half-hour."

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The colonel laughed, and acceded to his wish; on which he gave the word shoulder arms, threes right, slope arms, quick march; and entering Alicante at our head in his naval uniform, there made us over in due form to our own officers. Neither did we part from him empty-handed: he marched us to a wine-shop, caused a bottle per man to be served out, and paid for that, as well as for a loaf of bread, which he said was necessary to hinder the liquor from unfavourably affecting us.

We proceeded to establish ourselves in the barracks of Santo Zoro, where we remained about a fortnight, till the weakness incident upon a sea-voyage had subsided. We then advanced as far as Tibi, of which, as well as of Ibe, our first division had already possessed themselves, and concerning which all my remembrances are disagreeable. A hideous country it is in which these towns are planted; bleak and barren, and covered on its surface with cold grey stones; while the towns themselves are in every respect such as the traveller might expect to encounter in such a situation. For two tedious and uninteresting months we lay there, badly housed, and sometimes indifferently supplied with provisions; while of pay one issue, and no more, was made to us, and that, if I recollect right, put very little money into the pockets of individuals. Nevertheless, we were not, in a military point of view, altogether idle. The army being told off into brigades, or corps, took the form of an organised body; and preparations were made, as the

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winter wore on, to take the field with the first approach of spring.

To the battalion of which I was a member, to the first Italian levy, the Calabrian Free Corps, and two companies of German Riflemen, was intrusted the honour of acting as light troops. We had attached to us, likewise, the squadron of Brunswick Hussars, occasionally a troop or two of the 20th Light Dragoons, and two grasshopper-guns; and the whole were placed under the orders, first of Lord Frederick Bentinck, and ultimately of Colonel Sir Frederick Adam. Of the distribution of the other corps I cannot speak so confidently, further than that our first battalion was brigaded with the 58th and 81st; and that there were attached to us a good many Spaniards, of whom the appearance was at least respectable. But these are points with which I am very little concerned: let me, therefore, confine my attention to my own personal adventures.

It was on the 5th of March, 1813, just as the first streaks of dawn began to make their appearance in the horizon, that the light brigade, having paraded an hour previously, quitted the cantonments at Ibe, and moved upon Alcoe. A toilsome march we had of it, for Alcoe is distant from Ibe about eighteen miles; yet we accomplished it in good time, and carried every man of the brigade along with us. Our business for the present was not, however, to fight, but to reconnoitre. We advanced to the top of the

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hill, behind which the town is planted; and looked down, for a brief space, upon as fair a landscape as is often to be met with in this part of the world. There, embowered amid orange and olive groves, lay the town, another range of low hills enclosing it behind; while through the valley a clear stream made its way, as tranquilly as if the the sounds of war had never been heard upon its banks. But we did not remain long unnoticed; neither did the French, who with perhaps a couple of battalions occupied the place, seem disposed to sit patiently under our examination of their arrangements. We saw two or three companies spread themselves among the olive-trees; we beheld the head of a column formed, as if to support, in the principal street; and we immediately threw ourselves into such order as would enable us to act against them, should they come on.

There was no intention on our part to bring on a battle; indeed, our orders were explicit, at all hazards to decline one; but we could not, having shown ourselves, turn about and run, without putting safety, as well as honour, to the hazard. The light company of the 27th, therefore, with the two rifle companies, were pushed down the hill and extended; while the battalions drew slowly, and in good order, towards the rear. Here, then, I was, for the first time, brought into a situation where the stakes to be played for are men's lives; for it was quite certain, that whatever might be the fate

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of our comrades, we, the skirmishers, could not escape scathless; and let me add, that no thinking person ever finds himself in such a situation without being sobered by it. Was I, then, afraid? Nothing of the sort: whether it be constitutional, or the result of reflection, I can say with truth, that I never experienced *fear* in my life; that is to say, I cannot conceive how any man should so far forget what is due to himself as to shrink from perils to which his comrades are exposed, or sacrifice character in order to preserve his life. But now, even more solemnly than afterwards, I remember, that a very deep religious feeling came over me: I prayed to God earnestly, that he would forgive what I might have done amiss, cover my head if it were His pleasure, or else take me to himself; and having done so, I gave my undivided attention to the enemy. What those on the right and left of me were about I knew no more than if I had been there alone; my sole desire became thenceforth to deliver my shot with effect, and to obey steadily and coolly the bugle calls, as from time to time I heard them.

The French came on with great rapidity, and began to fire at a very long range — most of the balls fell short; but as they drew nearer, there was a constant singing about my ears, which warned me that sharper hail than any to which I had heretofore been accustomed, was falling. Then, indeed, we replied to them after their own fashion; and for

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half an hour, perhaps, the fire was sharp and well-sustained, though in its effects it proved wonderfully harmless. I do not think that we of the 27th lost a man; and from the extended files of our assailants I saw only three go back, as if wounded. Meanwhile we, in obedience to the instructions which had been issued, continued to fall back till between us and the town the ridge of the hill was interposed, and we began to descend rapidly on the other side. The enemy did not follow us further: they crowned the ridge, fired one parting round, and then stood still; upon which our bugles sounded the assembly, and we formed into a little column in rear of the brigade. Then went we on, without halting, over the whole of the route which we had traversed during the day; and at a late hour in the evening we came in, thoroughly jaded, to Ibe.

A march of six and thirty miles is a serious undertaking under any circumstances: and, to persons loaded as we were, it is terrible; for we had carried that day, each man, not only his entire kit, but a blanket additional to his great coat; yet we did not leave a man behind. Exhausted and useless we doubtless were; so much so, indeed, that when ordered to give in our blankets, and diminish, as much as possible, the contents of our respective knapsacks, our powers of watchfulness were sorely taxed in obeying the injunction. Nevertheless, we

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went through with it in a state almost of half-consciousness; and then throwing ourselves upon our beds, dressed as we were, we slept, as men generally do when both mind and body have been taxed to the utmost limit of their endurance.

The next day was given up, as a season of perfect rest and quiet; and we flattered ourselves, well-merited was our enjoyment of it. But in the evening the bugles sounded; and not our brigade only, but the whole division, stood to their arms. The reconnoissance of the 5th had, it appeared, served its purpose; and now the General was about to carry into execution a plan which he had formed in reference to Alcoe. To the 58th, 81st, and first battalion of the 27th directions were given to pass round the town to the rear; and, that no miscarriage might arise, they were, with the heavy guns, put in motion an hour before we set out. Meanwhile the light brigade, following the route with which they were already acquainted, received instructions to attack Alcoe in front; and it was confidently anticipated, that of the French force which lay there, not a man would escape. But projects such as this are of very uncertain issue at all times. So much, of necessity, depends upon moments, that any unlooked-for hindrance, however minute, whether it be occasioned by bad roads or impediments thrown in the way by the enemy to baffle the advance of one of the columns even for

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half an hour, is sure to derange the whole series of operations. I believe that the heavy column had difficulties that night to contend against, greater by far than the General had taken into his account; at all events, I know that the meditated surprise of the French garrison came to nothing.

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CHAPTER VII.

SHARP SERVICE.—A SINGLE COMBAT—AND A DESPERATE WOUND.

I CANNOT tell how it may have fared with the other divisions of the army; but the brigade to which I was attached began its march in such time that we arrived on the brow of the hill which looks down into Alcoe, soon after the day had broken. There we halted for a brief space, partly for the purpose of resting the men previously to their being brought into action; partly that more time might be afforded to the force which had gone by a more circuitous route, for the accomplishment of their object. But the day advances very rapidly in the south of Spain, after the dawn has first broken; and we in consequence became visible to the enemy's outposts sooner, perhaps, than was desired. Be that, however, as it may, we had not occupied the ridge a quarter of an hour, ere the word was given to form for the attack; and the three light companies, already in the advance, were thrown out in skirmishing order.

We descended the hill without sustaining any op-

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position; not even by the dropping shots of the piquet, which occupied the high road, were we annoyed; for the enemy fell back as we drew on, and were soon lost to us amid the buildings. A single sentry continued, indeed, to keep his place outside the town, and we could observe that there was lying near him a heap of papers, whether letters, or orders, or archives, I cannot tell. He waited till we had come well nigh within musket-shot of him; then, applying a match to the bundle, the whole became ignited; after which he, like his comrades, withdrew within the place.

There was something in all this which excited our curiosity; so we set up a sort of shout, and, dashing forward, made an effort to reach the pile of papers in sufficient time to save them. We were not successful; indeed, long before we could reach the fire, it had burned itself out, and there remained nothing for us to gaze upon but a little heap of ashes. Wherefore, on we went, our files closing towards the centre, so as to form a miniature column, ere we entered the street, and in a moment the place was our own. But we made no halt in it: passing rapidly through, we found ourselves amid groves and gardens, with which, in the rear as well as in front, Alcoe is surrounded; and there, for the first time since the movement began, the quick and sharp reports of the enemy's musketry saluted us. They had thrown a body of skirmishers among the plantations, and right well these veteran soldiers knew how

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to avail themselves of the cover; for in front, and on both flanks we were instantly greeted with a fusilade, which did us some damage, without much exposing the assailants to reprisals. Nevertheless, we were not slow in replying to it; so that the woods soon rang with that peculiar and most animating music, with which only the light corps of an army engaged in the field ever become familiar.

Some time previous to this affair, we had lost Captain Windsor from our company, and got in his room as kind and good a soldier as ever led troops into fire — Captain Parsons was this officer's name, who, though an eccentric character, was an exceeding favourite with the men. When we were in the middle of the skirmish, he came up to the place where I chanced to be, arrayed for all the world like Robinson Crusoe, having a long pike-shod staff strapped to his back, a fusee over his shoulder, and in his belt a couple of pistols. He walked about from file to file, and was encouraging us to take a good aim, and urging us forward, when a ball struck him exactly over the sash, and he staggered.

"You are hurt, sir," said I, running up to him, and offering him my arm: "I hope not badly."

"I believe they have peppered me for this bout, Ewart," was his reply; "but never mind. There are others to lead, and you will not fail to follow. Go on, my lads; don't think of me."

He sat down as he said this, and we were all exceedingly grieved for him, because we loved him

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much; and as he held his hand to the upper part of the groin, we were afraid lest the wound might prove fatal. But it is not during the excitement of a battle that soldiers find time to indulge their feelings. The French were before us, and we soon forgot Captain Parsons and his wound, while driving them from brake to brake, and forcing them back upon their supports.

The gardens and groves were soon emptied; after which we found ourselves upon a sort of broken plain, at the further extremity of which, so as to occupy the summit of a gentle undulation, the main body of the French had formed line. Upon this their skirmishers retreated; while we connected ourselves once more with the brigade as it came up, and the whole moved forward in a body. The French were not, I think, so numerous as we: yet they exhibited no signs of fear, but waiting till we had arrived within point blank range, they gave their fire. It was instantly returned; after which we brought our firelocks to the charge, and rushed forward. They would not, however, abide the shock; on the contrary, they threw in another volley, without so much as pausing to take an accurate aim, and then fled in great confusion, leaving a cloud of tirailleurs to cover them.

It was clear enough by this time that there was an end to the hope which had brought us hither: and that to intercept the French detachment was impossible. Our heavy brigades, indeed, were still in

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the rear; so, about noon we were directed to halt, and form, and march back to the inclosures on the outskirts of Alcoi, where, in an extensive and beautiful olive-garden, we spent the remainder of the day. I am sorry to say that we were not quite so careful of the property of our allies as might, perhaps, have been becoming. The olive, a valuable tree when raised, is exceedingly slow in growth,—so much so, indeed, as to require a life-time to bring it to maturity; yet we cut it down with a profuse hand, in order that our fires might be kept burning, and consumed, in sheer wantonness, a great deal more than even for that purpose was necessary. So much for the condition and prospects of a country over which the tide of war is rolled; so much for the habits of thinking which a state of warfare never fails to create in men's minds.

We slept that night round our olive-wood fires, not without the occurrence of several accidents; for three or four pouches, being brought too near to the flames, ignited, and some alarm to the wearers, with a good deal of merriment elsewhere, was occasioned. Nobody was, however, hurt; so that, when we began our backward march on the morrow, we carried our full complement along with us. But we were not carried back on this occasion to the miserable town of Ibe. While the profitless expedition to Alcoi was giving occupation to us, the main body of the army had taken up a position at Castalla, where, on the 8th of March, we rejoined it, nowise dis-

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tressed to find ourselves in new and, in many respects, more convenient quarters.

From the 8th to the 15th of March was to us a season of something like repose. We had, to be sure, the common routine of duty to attend to, and we showed ourselves on our respective parade-grounds twice in every day; but no military movement of importance was effected, and of the enemy we neither heard nor saw anything. On the 15th, however, orders were given for the light company, the Grenadiers, and two battalion companies of the 27th, to stand to their arms soon after night-fall, and to proceed under the guidance of certain spies, on some secret expedition to the front. We obeyed, of course, and found ourselves, about nine or ten o'clock, paraded under the beams of a full clear moon, and conducted by roads, on which the snow lay thick and firm, we did not know whither. We were in excellent spirits, as is always the case with soldiers when an air of mystery appears to hang over their proceedings; and we trudged along, pleasing ourselves with speculations on what the morrow might bring forth. And so we penetrated through Bancai, a large straggling village, long before its inhabitants had begun to rouse themselves, the word having been previously passed, not only to keep silence, but to step as lightly as possible while traversing the street. But as the morning came in, our difficulties began to accumulate upon us. Though the nights were very cold, the sun possessed great power, and his rays

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soon melted the snow which had heretofore supported us; so that we sank at each step deeper and deeper in the mire, and became, by degrees, seriously impeded in our movements. The consequence was, that, instead of arriving at Biechar, where we were expected to surprise an enemy's plundering-party at dawn, we did not reach the outskirts of the town till the morning was considerably advanced, and were therefore unable to accomplish more than the seizure of fifty-nine mules, all of them laden with booty; for the French, having contrived to obtain intelligence of our approach, retreated in good time to save themselves; and even of their plunder we should have failed to get possession, had we not made extraordinary exertions to push on.

Great was the rejoicing among the Spaniards when we marched into the town; and greater still their amazement when they beheld the use to which our success was turned. Instead of appropriating the booty to himself, and carrying it back to head-quarters, the commanding officer caused the Alcalde to receive the whole into his keeping; and then collected the heads of families by proclamation, into one place, in order that each might identify his own goods, and reclaim them. I never saw men more strongly affected by sentiments of admiration and gratitude than these poor Spaniards. Some of them went so far as to shed tears; whilst the amount of wine and provisions, which they sought to press upon us, was so abundant, that had we accepted

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the whole, we should have been in bad plight to execute our homeward march, or indeed to perform any other species of duty. Moreover, they implored us not to leave them. They would submit cheerfully to any amount of requisition, if we would only remain and protect them from the French; but this was out of the question. Wherefore, having halted about an hour, and taken as much both of bread and wine as sufficed to recruit our exhausted energies without affecting our sobriety, we stood to our arms once more, and fell back to Bancai.

Our movement in advance, though fatiguing enough, had been executed under the excitement of anticipated service; our retrogression, a great deal more toilsome in itself, had no such principle to lighten or sustain it. As the sun's power increased, the roads became more and more heavy, till by and by we plunged at every step ankle deep into the soil. Then followed the breaking of gaiter-straps, then the coming off of shoes, which few had time, and fewer still patience to redeem; for the foot being dragged out, the shoe was left behind, and the mud closed over it irretrievably. Great, therefore, was the measure of our rejoicing when it was announced that we should not proceed further than Bancai that night, and cordial the expression of our satisfaction when, having been formed up in the market-place, we were desired to go and occupy, each man for himself, the best billet that we could find. It was my fortune to establish myself, together with

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the four men of my squad, in the house of an old couple; they either had no provisions of any kind, or judged it expedient not to share them with us. But some Indian corn we did discover in the course of our investigations, and out of that, fried in olive oil, we contrived to make a tolerable supper. Moreover, two of my party, by name Dodd and Crichton, being noted for their skill as foragers in similar situations, contrived, while rummaging up some fagots, with which to feed the fire, to bring to light a cask of excellent old wine. From this we made no scruple of drawing as much as our immediate necessities required; and filling our canteens, over and above, as a preparation for the morrow. Yet, let me do justice both to myself, and to the light company in general. There was not a drunken man among us; and when an hour before daylight we mustered next morning under arms, we were all, much to our new captain's satisfaction, sober.

We reached Castalla on the 17th, having done all that men could do, yet accomplished little; and rested there, as we had done previously to this little excursion, for about a week. But the enemy, it appeared, were no longer willing that the campaign should be one of demonstrations; and the light brigade, now under the command of Sir Frederick Adam, was ordered in advance as far as Bear. There, all the arduous yet exciting duties of the outposts devolved upon us. For nearly six weeks we never undressed, except to shift our linen, nor

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took off our accoutrements but for some necessary purpose; while from two in the morning till ten or eleven o'clock at night, no one ventured to pass to the distance of a hundred yards from the spot where his company's arms were piled. No doubt we had our piquets and advanced sentries in front, to which those who happened not to be attached, acted as a reserve; but the sole difference in situation between the two bodies, consisted in this, that the one never slept at all, and the other only by snatches. And an admirable example of vigilance and self-possession was set to us by our gallant brigadier; never on his couch till eleven o'clock, Sir Frederick Adam was in the saddle again each morning by one; and had been round all the out-guards, and seen that every man was on the alert, ere our early parade was formed.

So passed the interval between the last days of April and the 12th of June, the latter of which periods brought with it something like a moral assurance, that, ere long, other and sterner qualities would be called into use than those of mere vigilance. There came up that day from the rear, a brigade of Spanish Grenadiers; the Brunswick Hussars, two squadrons; the 20th light dragooons, two troops; with two pieces of cannon, as many ammunition waggons, and several head of cattle, in a most melancholy state of leanness. One of the latter was immediately given to us as a great treat to men in our peculiar situation, for not once since our arrival

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at Bear, had we found leisure to kill and dress any living creature, so that of salt pork and salt beef we were beginning to grow heartily tired. But though the commissary's intentions might be very amiable, they availed us little. The cow was tied up to a tree; she was so completely spent with travel and lack of food, that she could scarcely stand upon her feet; and Colonel Reeves, in order to anticipate the progress of exhaustion and disease, caused her to be shot. Surely, a wanton and cruel murder was that, out of which no benefit accrued to any human being. We never found leisure to cut her up, and, as to cooking, that was quite out of the question.

We were posted at this time in rear of Bear, along the base of a range of low hills, by which it is overlooked; and the line when formed stood usually in this order:—On the right were the Calabrians, a remarkably brave and intelligent body of men, with their dark-blue uniforms faced with green; on the left were the Italians, while we, with the two German rifle companies, held the centre. To-day, however, the Spaniards took the right of all; and the guns were so placed as to bear upon the main road. Meanwhile, the cavalry, which had gone forward, doubtless to reconnoitre, were seen returning at a quick walk, with their swords sloped. "They had seen the enemy; they were by far too numerous to be stopped; they would be upon us immediately, for they were close at hand." And

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scarcely was the word spoken, when evidences of the enemy's approach were presented. Forth from the town beneath us a long column came streaming, which opened to the right and left, so as to form all along our front, and executed the movement with a precision and regularity which gave good assurance of the sort of struggle which we should be called upon to maintain. Then began the drums to beat, and the cry, "En avant! en avant!" to be raised, and in a few minutes we were engaged in as warm and desperate an affair as any in which a portion of the British army has anywhere, I will venture to assert, taken part.

We were fearfully outnumbered from the outset; and every minute brought up to the enemy fresh reinforcements. The Spaniards, likewise, soon gave way; and the bugles sounded both for us and our comrade regiments, to fall back. We did so leisurely, the skirmishers disputing every inch of ground ere they resigned it; and ascending the hill with the pace of men who are quitting some objects that are very dear to them. Meanwhile the French gathering into a dense mass, charged, and made themselves masters of our guns, and something like confusion threatened unexpectedly to extend even to the line, which we had vainly endeavoured to cover. But Sir Frederick Adam was everywhere. He rode up to the Italians, stopped them on the brow of the hill; cheered them on to the attack, and led the way. In a moment the rush was

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given; the French were borne back, and the two guns recovered. And then began again such an unceasing rattle of musketry as those alone can describe to themselves, who know from experience what a combat of skirmishers is, when each side is for ever feeding and supporting its own. But the combat was on our side altogether at a disadvantage. Back and back we were borne among the rocks and broken ground by which the Bear side of the hill near its summit is characterised; and so fierce was the pursuit of the French, that the personal combats were in no instances further apart than thirty, in many as near as five paces from muzzle to muzzle.

It was at this juncture in the unequal struggle that two events befell, of which I may make mention, the latter of which very seriously affected myself, while the former was of more grave importance to another. While we were retiring towards the ridge, there came from the rear a young officer of the 10th regiment, a Mr. Thompson, on a beautiful white horse, who, finding Sir Frederick Adam but slenderly attended, requested and obtained permission to do duty throughout the day as his aid-de-camp. I saw him in the road near me, in the act of pointing to the front with his sword, when a musket-ball struck him on the forehead, and he fell dead to the ground. Poor fellow! he was a fair-complexioned delicate-looking youth, and his light hair curled gracefully about his temples; but the bullet spares neither youth nor beauty, and there he lay in his blood. His horse, instead of

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plunging forward, as generally happens in such cases, turned round, and galloped to the rear; while I, by what impulse guided I cannot tell, seized his sword, and thrust it into my belt. But I took nothing else, and even this I desired to carry out of the field only in the hope that an opportunity might offer of sending or giving it to his friends. I had scarcely done so, when the bugle sounded the retreat. Again, and again, and again, the call was heard, followed by the urgent notes of the double-quick; and I heard the adjutant's voice behind me, calling on me by name to obey the signal; but I paid no heed to it. Indeed, I did not dare to obey, for mine was at that moment as perilous a position as even a soldier, in such a field, is ever called upon to fill.

When I had taken Mr. Thompson's sword, I made a sort of swerve to the right, which brought me in rear of the angle of a rock, which jutted out from a bank over the road, and offered me, as I conceived, a momentary cover. My piece had just been discharged, and I halted there to reload; and the operations were barely completed, when a Grenadier of the 101st French regiment rushed up to the opposite side of the rock, and held me completely at bay. I saw him spring forward; I knew that he was there; I could not, however, lift myself up to fire upon him, because he had shown that he was prepared for me; and so we stood, with a narrow ledge of stone between us, each ready, so soon as the other should expose himself, to deliver his fire. In

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vain, therefore, for me was the bugle sounded, and the word of command given. One step to the rear would have exposed me to certain death; indeed, I could not doubt that the Grenadier only waited for the unwise movement to take his aim deliberately, and the space between us was too narrow to afford the smallest chance of escape.

I stood several seconds, with my firelock half raised to the shoulder, and the finger of the right hand laid on the trigger. Had the Frenchman shown but the top of his head, I would have taken my chance; but he continued motionless. I could not fail to be aware that all my comrades were gone, and that the pursuers would soon be round me. What was I to do? My blood was up. I never so much as thought of surrendering; but, resolute to have at least a chance for my life, I determined to dare the worst. I did not lift myself over the ridge, but, taking a pace to the right, I was in an instant confronted with my enemy, both of us being fully exposed. He hastened to bring his musket to the present, but I was too quick for him. I gave my fire, and he dropped dead at my feet.

Not a moment did I pause, except to look once upon my fallen foe, which sufficed to show me that he was a remarkably athletic fellow. I took no trophy from him; but, running as hard as I could after the line of my own people, I resumed my place in the ranks, and fought on throughout the remainder of the battle. And a very hard day's work

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we had of it. Ours was a continual retreat, six miles being between us and the position of the main body at Castalla; yet we contrived, by the obstinacy of the defence which we offered, to expend six long hours in effecting it. I need scarcely add that the expenditure of ammunition was prodigious. For myself, I fired that day not fewer than one hundred and forty rounds, till my piece became at last so foul, that the ball would scarcely go down, and I bled at the nose as if I had been wounded, from the effect of its desperate recoils.

We regained the position of Castalla about six o'clock in the evening; and to our surprise, and, if the truth must be told, not to our dissatisfaction, found ourselves ordered back to the rear; while the duty of the advanced post was committed to some other regiments. We said to ourselves,—"This is quite fair. We have had our own portion of the work; let them come in, now, for theirs." But we had entirely misapprehended the design of our chiefs. The sole purposes for which we were placed, even temporarily, behind the line were, that we might clean our muskets, and have fresh ammunition served out; and as soon as these ends had been effected, we were ordered to the front again. There was no murmuring at this, certainly. The front is the post of honour, and we had already imbibed enough of the spirit of chivalry to rejoice in having such a station allotted to us. Yet I cannot say that we should have broken our hearts had the distinction been conferred

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for four-and-twenty hours on some of the other brigades; and I know that a supply of wine and biscuit came very opportunely to sustain us. We ate and drank, and then lay down, others to sleep soundly, I to give way to a sense of depression which was certainly not habitual with me, and the triumph of which, on the present occasion, has often in after days been to myself a ground of very great astonishment.

I had killed, during the skirmish of the preceding day, a man whom, in the working of a disordered imagination, I now conceived that I had no right to kill. He was a French soldier certainly; but when I fired at him, it was somewhat in wantonness; for he was not making any direct attempt upon my life, though questionless associated with others who were so occupied. It was, indeed, his singularly careless mode of advancing with sloped arms, along the side of a wall, that attracted my attention, and I said to my comrade,

"That fellow seems to take it coolly; let me try whether I can't astonish him."

So saying, I levelled my piece, and he instantly fell. I cannot now conceive why the recollection of this deed should have haunted me; but it did so, and I became, in spite of myself, gloomy, well-nigh to the level of despondency. Under these circumstances all sorts of dark shadows interposed themselves between me and the future, till in the end I came to the conclusion that I should certainly be

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killed on the morrow. Having settled this point, I spoke of it to my comrade; told him what to do with my little stock of private property, directed him how to address a letter to my mother, and strove to make my peace with God. Finally I closed my eyes and slept. But even my dreams were wild and extravagant, and painfully distinct, so that I was glad when the word passed to stand to our arms; and instantly sprang to my feet.

We formed, as is customary in like cases, each battalion on its own ground, and waited with due patience till the day should dawn, or the enemy, or our own leaders, begin to bring our more active energies into play. At length the grey light of morning broke in upon the far east, becoming minute by minute more distinct, as well as more extensive, till by and by the sun rose above the horizon, and wood and plain, and mountain and ravine, rejoiced alike in the splendour of his rays. To us, however, the only speculations to which they gave birth, had reference to the enemy's movements. Overnight we had seen their fires, lighted as it were in a moment, and stretching along the cord of the arc of which we held the bow; and now, we naturally counted on their availing themselves of their more ready lines of communication, and commencing the attack in such time as to give an opportunity of improving their advantage in case they should succeed in forcing our position. But the morning broke without putting them in motion, and sunrise

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saw all things in the same order which the sunset had witnessed. Accordingly, Sir Frederick, whose attention to his men's comforts was as conspicuous and as unremitting as his vigilance, began to consider of the propriety of providing us with breakfast; and parties were in consequence ordered out to procure wine from the town.

"I will ride forward," said he to Colonel Reeves, "and place myself upon that eminence, where I can see distinctly the first movement in the enemy's lines. If I draw my sword, recall your people instantly; if I wave my hat, let them go on. There will be time to complete their business ere a shot is fired."

Away he rode as he spoke, while we (for I was in charge of one of the parties) ran towards Castalla, without, however, withdrawing our eyes for a moment from him who acted at once as our vidette and our general. We saw him with extreme satisfaction wave his hat; and the grass could make slight progress in growth beneath our feet. But we were hardly in possession of the coveted liquor, ere out came his sword from its scabbard. Then, indeed, was our speed doubled, for well we knew that such was required. We hurried back to the position; served out the supply at random to the several messes; drank as much as to ourselves individually seemed to be expedient, and stood to our arms. It was high time that we should do so, for the enemy were advancing.

Once more it fell to the lot of the light company

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to take up in communication with the German Rifles an alignement considerably in advance of the main position. Unluckily for us, however, the ground on which we lay down, though somewhat broken, was not very abundant in cover, whereas immediately in our front there were some detached rocks, under shelter of which the enemy were enabled to approach within a short distance of us. Accordingly, the skirmish was at once tedious of making a beginning, and when it did begin, nothing for a while could be more languid. But as the columns pressed them from behind, the French voltigeurs came forth from their hiding-places, and then the fire grew both warm and rapid. Our combat came, indeed, to be almost muzzle to muzzle; for we could not be forced back; and they came on with such exceeding boldness, that the very features of the combatants grew familiar, the one to the other. Neither in other parts of the field was the battle permitted to languish: to-day, as yesterday, the Spaniards had one of our flanks, and the French soon drove them from their post, so that it became necessary to weaken our centre by detaching two companies, whom the General charged to recover the ground which as many battalions had abandoned. But the absence of these companies, while it hindered Colonel Reeves from feeding us, as he would have otherwise done from the line; so it induced him to beg that General Adam would sanction a charge, were it only for the purpose of

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relieving us from the overwhelming force which by accumulation bore down upon us. I have understood that the General was not very willing to hazard a step of which he could not foresee the ultimate consequences. He even refused to permit the advance of the whole line, and yielded at last, only when the Colonel assured him that two or three companies and no more, should be committed. But when Reeves stepped forward, and waved his hat as a signal, the entire brigade as if moved by one common impulse obeyed it. I cannot conceive a more magnificent spectacle than their bold and steady advance created. There was no shouting, at first, no running forward, nothing but a firm and well-regulated step, as if they who made it had been guided by the sound of music, and were performing a manœuvre on parade. And then when they closed upon us, and only a few yards divided them from the enemy, fell and fatal was the volley, and tremendous the rush that followed. But I had no part in the onset: a ball had already struck me in the left arm, passed completely through, shattering the bone above the elbow, and entered the side in such a direction as to break the blade-bone after it had severely injured the upper ribs. I felt my arm drop powerless; I knew that the wound was a severe one; I saw no blood, but was quite aware that I could be of no further service that day, so I lay down upon the ground, anxiously desiring first

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that the line of fire might as soon as possible get beyond me; and next, that somebody would come up, to whom I could apply for assistance in extricating myself from what was now the almost intolerable pressure of my knapsack, straps, and accoutrements.

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